

Truth and Reality: The Importance of Truthmaking for Philosophy

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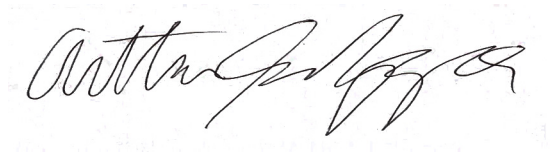
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Statement of Originality

I, Arthur Schipper, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arthur Schipper', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Abstract

In this dissertation, I attempt to improve our understanding of truthmaker theory (TT) by defending the *modest importance* of TT for philosophy via addressing in-house issues. I am not addressing the TT-skeptic. In Part 1, I articulate a *metaphysically modest* version of TT which focuses on the notion of aboutness. In Part 2, I apply this version to three further debates, to which TT has been thought to have substantial applications, radically reinterpreting each of these applications in a metaphysically modest way.

Part 1 starts, in §1, with a presentation of what I call the basic account of TT (BATT), which posits the bare-bones requirements of TT, stripping it of its immodest and question-begging metaphysical commitments concerning the nature of truthbearers and truthmakers. In §2, I present my favoured, aboutness-based, version of TT (TAAT) which goes beyond BATT in an explicitly modest way. In §3, I sketch how TAAT can provide a *piecemeal* strategy to address the problem of negative truths. In §4, I detail TAAT's metaphysical modesty.

Part 2 starts, in §5, by rejecting a rival account which I call Truthmaker Fundamentalism. In §6, I undermine the orthodox conception of "cheater-catching" and reinterpret that task as semantical rather than metaphysical. In §7, I argue that TT, on pain of being question-begging, must retreat from its association with substantial realism to what I call Modest Realism, which is compatible with anti-realism. In §8, I distinguish between truth-conditions, truthmakers, and truthmaker-conditions and articulate a two-step conception of inquiry and a modest conception of understanding truthmakers.

In conclusion, I hope to have defended and reinvigorated an approach to understanding the relation between truth and reality, which has been much neglected in the recent TT-literature, but which must be taken seriously as a metaphysically *modest* alternative to current, metaphysically extravagant, orthodoxy.

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Introduction

0.1 General Aims of the Dissertation: *A Plea For Modesty*

In philosophy, as in other areas of life, modesty and moderation are supreme virtues. Thus, the starting point of this dissertation is what I call the Modesty Principle:

Modesty Principle (MP): If one can be modest about anything, one should be.

This general principle applies to one's estimations of one's abilities and also of one's aims, but it can also be applied more specifically in philosophy. When philosophising about any subject matter, one can formulate a more specific version of this general MP, applying it to the subject matter:

Applied Modesty Principle (AMP): For some subject matter *S*, if one's theory of *S* can be more modest, one's theory should be more modest.

I shall assume that any proposed theory about some subject matter *S*, which adheres to AMP better than rivals, is the more plausible theory about *S*. The main, general aim of this dissertation is to apply MP to the subject matter of truthmaking. By presenting a version of truthmaker theory (TT) that is as modest as possible, I aim to argue that truthmaking is important for philosophy, but only modestly so. My specific aims are two-fold. First, in Part One, I present my preferred version of TT as a modest, and hence more plausible, alternative to the more extravagant rival theories, which now constitute TT-orthodoxy. After presenting the basic assumptions of TT (§1) and my favoured, aboutness-based account (§2), I address the problem of negative truths (§3) and explain what metaphysical modesty is in more depth (§4). Second, in Part Two, in the light of MP, I try to settle the most important in-house disputes amongst truthmaker theorists (TT-ists, for short)¹, concerning TT's relationship to fundamentality (§5), cheater-catching (§6), realism (§7), and inquiry (§8).

Also included are six appendices which are not to be read as part of the examination of this dissertation. They expand on the positions that I defend in the various chapters in ways that go beyond what is necessary for the dissertation but which bring added

¹Throughout the dissertation, I add '-ist' to abbreviations to designate those who hold the views or theories designated by the abbreviated names.

support to the overall project and sketch avenues where my project can move forward in the future. At the very end, after the bibliography, there is an index, which contains page numbers indicating where principles, abbreviations, and some key phrases are informatively introduced or defined.

0.2 Note About TT-skepticism: *I am not addressing the skeptic*

There is a wealth of recent and not-so-recent work which is *skeptical* about truth in general (by, for instance, claiming that there are no truths, that truth is impossible, or that there is no such property as *being true*), or *skeptical* about the reality of a *truthmaking relation*, the generally or mainly asymmetric dependence relation which non-skeptics hold to exist between truths and reality.

There are a variety of ways to argue for these sorts of claims, and to use the arguments for these claims to undermine the project of TT. However, I shall not engage directly with these TT-skeptical arguments or views in this dissertation. My aim is *not* to motivate or defend TT against the TT-skeptic. Rather, I aim to address those who accept the main intuitions behind TT but who are undecided about which version of TT is most plausible. I give those already very sympathetic to TT a *modest* alternative to *extravagant* orthodoxy. Thus, I can leave unanswered some of the main problems that plague all versions of TT.

This said, I think that TT-skepticism has many virtues, which, unfortunately, I do not have space to extol or discuss in depth here. Throughout the dissertation, however, I shall discuss some of the most powerful, but also illuminating, skeptical worries that any TT-ist must address. I see these skeptical worries as useful *challenges* for TT-ists, not just to address the skeptic, but to address rival attempts to build a version of TT. In particular, to embrace MP and give a modest account of TT, one cannot beg the question against one's rival TT-ists. I discuss these skeptical challenges, not in order to save TT from skepticism, but, rather, in order to do some much needed in-house, spring cleaning. In short, although I assume the position of non-skepticism, I shall try to undermine TT-orthodoxy and completely re-imagine TT in a modest way. I make the case for what I call the aboutness-based account of truthmaking (TAAT), supplemented by the most important details of what I take to be the right, truth-relevant theory of aboutness, what I call the *strict* and *full* account of aboutness (SAC). The very viability of my modest account serves as an additional, albeit generally non-skeptical, *challenge* to the metaphysical immodesty that pervades the current orthodoxy in regard to the importance and the nature of the relation between truth and reality.

Part I

A Modest Proposal: *The Aboutness Account of Truthmaking*

Chapter 1

The Basic Account of Truthmaking

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present what I call the Basic Account of Truthmaking (BATT). I first (in §1.2) explain the basic assumptions of TT that will guide the rest of the discussion in my dissertation, and will lay the foundations on which my preferred version of TT *modestly* builds (§2 onwards). I then explain what I take to be BATT's assumptions and lack of assumptions about the nature of truthbearers (TBRs, for short) (§1.3), relations (§1.4), truth (§1.5), and truthmakers (TMKs, for short) (§1.7). Throughout, I shall also present what I take to be some of the consequences of using BATT to build further versions of TT.

1.2 Some Basic Assumptions of TT

TT is the theory neutrally and minimally understood as articulating a particular sort of relation which holds between truth and reality, which is commonly called TRUTHMAKING or *making true*, or, as I am abbreviating it here, T-REL. A basic form of TT can be expressed with a generalised conditional thus:

TRUTHMAKING (TM): a TBR is true if some part(s) of reality makes it true.¹

We shall see (§3) that there are serious versions of TT which hold that not all TBRs are made true by any part of reality. So as not to exclude these accounts, TM needs to be put in terms of a conditional rather than a biconditional. The making true done by “some part(s) of reality”,² the TMKs, is best understood as a generally *asymmetric* relation.³ Thus, the first basic requirement of TT is:

¹I use the terms ‘world’ and ‘reality’ interchangeably. Van Fraassen (1995: 139ff; 2002: 5) argues that there is an underlying ambiguity in the term ‘world’ and that the notion of the-world-as-a-whole is a term of philosopher’s art in a similar way that the God of Descartes (1985: Meditations 3–5 [1641]) and Spinoza (2009 [1677]) is. I assume that any of the ambiguities inherent in the normal English word ‘world’ have analogues in ‘reality’.

²As I’ll make clear, there is no need to reify-as-entities the parts of reality that serve as TMKs.

³Remember, I am not aiming to respond to the TT-skeptic who would deny this basic assumption.

CLAIM TRUTHMAKING-RELATION (T-REL-C): There is a generally *asymmetric* relation between truths and reality, which is commonly known as *truthmaking* or *making true*, abbreviated here as T-REL.

Later, I reject standard attempts to put T-REL in terms of ENTAILMENT (ET) or NECESSITATION (NEC). Neutrally and minimally, T-REL is understood as a DEPENDENCE relation. We might say, then, that any TT should adhere to the following:

TRUTHMAKER DEPENDENCE (TD): T-REL is a species of dependence; truths depend for their truth on TMKs.

There are, of course, many other kinds of dependence relations which are not *asymmetric*, such as relations of interdependence or mutual dependence or co-dependence. So, it is important to make it clear that T-REL is a generally *asymmetric* sort of dependence. That is, truths (true TBRs) depend for their truth on the being⁴ of their TMKs, but TMKs do not depend for their being on the truth of the TBRs which they make true.

A variety of different kinds of dependence relations are distinguished not along *symmetry* lines. For example, causal dependence, essential dependence, and constitutive dependence are distinguished along other lines. What kind of relation T-REL is in these terms is a matter of dispute. I shall touch on this when discussing whether T-REL is a species of grounding in §5. However, it is generally agreed that the sort of dependence is not a causal one.⁵

tion of TT. For reasons to think T-REL is not asymmetric, see (David 2009: 152–4). See (Hornsby 2005: 41–42), who argues against Rodriguez-Pereyra (2005), claiming that truthmaking is not a relation and that the truth–reality asymmetry can be captured by the sentential connective ‘because’. However, her criticism is focused on Rodriguez-Pereyra’s (2005: 21) claim that truthmaking is an asymmetric *grounding* relation between *entities*. I shall also reject this kind of claim in various ways in this dissertation. (For example in §5, I reject the idea that T-REL is a grounding relation, and in §4, I reject the idea that TMKs must be *entities*. Both ideas require a metaphysically immodest account of TT.) Despite Hornsby’s criticism and her TT-skepticism, she might have no truck with my account and my way of spelling out BATT. Hornsby makes a distinction between grounding and dependence and says, “In one good sense, then, the truth of <the rose is red> depends upon the rose’s being red” (ibid.: 45). She argues that this is a different claim from “the rose’s being red is an entity, which, given <the rose is red>’s truth, stands to <the rose is red> in a relation of grounding” (ibid.). As will become clear (especially in §4.1), I agree. However, I think it’s important to understand T-REL as a relation. But, as I shall stipulate and explain in §1.4, relations come easy; relations don’t only relate entities, but anything that’s real.

⁴I say ‘being’ here instead of ‘existence’ for reasons I make explicit in §1.2.2.

⁵See (Beebe and Dodd 2005a: 2) and (Armstrong 2004: 5). A reason for this is that causation is deeply tied with time and process, while truthmaking is not temporal, but instantaneous. Also, the view that T-REL is causal is not the same as the view called “causal truthmaking” (Stenwall 2010: 214ff), which takes TMKs to be *causal facts*. The former is what all TT-ists reject. Stenwall’s (2010) view is a novel view about the nature of TMKs, not the nature of T-REL. He argues that his view helps solve the problem of finding TMKs for negative truths in such a way as not to have to posit problematic negative entities. I address the problem of negative truths in §3. Also, traditionally, TT-ists cite Aristotle as a proto-TT-ist. However, Aristotle clearly thinks that the asymmetric relation between truths and reality is causal when he says:

[I]f there is a man, the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, and reciprocally – since if the statement whereby we say that there is a man is true, there is a man. And whereas the true statement is in no way the cause of the actual thing’s

Furthermore, it is important to note that *dependence* is different from related notions such as *reduction*. For example, some X can depend on Y, but X might *not be reducible* to Y. According to all TT-ists, at least some truths depend for their truth on TMKs, but in no way are those truths *reducible* to TMKs. See (Heil 2003: 53–54).

1.2.1 T-REL and Entailment: *T-REL Isn't a Logical Relation*

Further, T-REL is not a *logical relation*. For instance, T-REL is not ENTAILMENT (ET). ET is essentially a relationship between TBRs, such as *sentences*, *propositions*, and *statements*. ET captures the *follows from* relation of logical consequence that two truth-apt entities can have. And T-REL is basically construed as a relation between truths and reality. All truths are true TBRs. But, not all TMKs are TBRs. Of course, sometimes the TMKs are TBRs. Consider the truth 'There is at least one TBR.'⁶ This truth is most plausibly made true by a TBR. But this is not the case for the majority of truths which plausibly have other aspects of reality as their TMKs. For example, the TBR 'there is at least one atom' is plausibly made true by an atom rather than a TBR. Atoms are not truth-apt, and hence are not TBRs. Thus, whatever account of T-REL is the right one, it needs to be able to capture this aspect of the relation:

Requirement that T-REL Does Not Relate Only TBRs (R-ROT): T-REL is a relation which, given normal linguistic practices, only rarely has TBRs on both sides of the relation.

ET cannot meet R-ROT. So, accounts which claim that T-REL is ET are not adequate. The right account of TT will be compatible with R-ROT. There is of course more to say about this, but I think this point is decisive against ET being or capturing T-REL. It is important, however, to be careful not to misunderstand what I am claiming here.

existence, the actual thing does seem in some way the cause of the statement's being true: it is because the actual thing exists or does not exist that the statement is called true or false. [*Categories* (1995: 14a14–22)]

However, Aristotle's notion of *cause* includes not just causation as we understand it, for example when Jonny caused Sally to cry by giving her a wedding ring, but includes what we would consider as non-causal dependence relations. Thus, although Aristotle is correctly translated as using the term 'cause', his view can be understood as compatible with TT.

⁶I follow the standard convention of using single quotation marks to mark the use/mention distinction and to talk about (mention) linguistic items and constructions, including TBRs. See (Bergmann 1959a: 19f), (Quine 1940: 26), and (Tarski 1933: 159). For reasons that will become clear in §1.3, when talking about linguistic items that are truth-apt, I shall use single quotation marks to mention *TBRs in general* (and not just sentences). If I am explicitly discussing propositions, then I follow the convention of using triangle brackets. If I am discussing sentences specifically, then I shall use single quotation marks, but it will be indicated or clear from the context that I am speaking about sentences rather than about TBRs in general. I shall normally only talk about specific types of TBRs to make a particular point about them, or to engage with an author who talks about them or uses them as their example of TBRs. I use double quotation marks, when not used as two single quotation marks (this should be clear from the context), mainly to *use* the quoted text, while attributing them to the author I am quoting, but also to mention what an author says in order to discuss it.

T-ET-ists⁷ claim that ET captures T-REL. One way to *capture* T-REL in terms of ET is to claim that T-REL just *is* ET. As we saw, this is clearly wrong. Let's take T-ET* to be the view that ET *captures* T-REL in some other way. Bigelow (1988), often cited as a main proponent of T-ET, I think, is best understood as a T-ET*-ist. He writes,

I suppose that entailment is to be a relation between propositions (whatever they are). Truthmaker should not be construed as saying that an *object* entails a truth; rather, it requires that the proposition *that that object exists* entails the truth in question. [Bigelow 1988: 126; his emphases]

Bigelow is right and I think he would agree with what I have said so far. R-ROT is not incompatible with what he says, and is not incompatible with T-ET*. One might say that ET *captures* T-REL by providing a *principle*, articulated in terms of a logical relation between propositions (or between other TBRs), for instance, the proposition *that these TMKs exist* and the proposition *that this TBR is true*. In this way, that ET *captures* T-REL is compatible with taking T-REL itself to be a relation that requires R-ROT. Bigelow (1988) clearly takes this line; even though he *captures* T-REL with ET, he takes T-REL itself to be a supervenience relation when he writes, "The essence of Truthmaker, I urge, is the idea that truth is supervenient on being" (1988: 132), where the relevant *being* on the right-side of the relation is not just a matter of TBRs.

However, as I shall argue in §2.3, ET is not a plausible candidate even if we understand T-ET* in this way. At best, we would need to include a relevance constraint to ET. I prefer to talk about trying to *understand* or *account for* T-REL *itself* rather than *principles* that are meant to *capture* the logical relations between TBRs which refer to T-REL and its relata: TMKs and other TBRs.

1.2.2 T-REL as Dependence on the *Being* of TMKs and not just on the *Existence* of TMKs

Finally, BATT must say that truth depends asymmetrically on the *being* of TMKs instead of the *existence* of TMKs. I say 'being' here because it is more general than a term such as 'existence', which only applies to entities such as objects (for example people, tables, or valleys) and processes (such as oxidation, hydrogenation, or non-violent democratic revolution), and not to *ways entities can be* (such as *being a worker*, *being green*, or *being a prime number*), which instead of existing can have being by *being instantiated* in objects that exist. As I shall make clearer in §1.7, substantial metaphysical commitments about the nature of TMKs cannot be built into BATT.

This will strike some as odd, especially those who follow Armstrong (2004: 5–7) in thinking that the TT-ist must motivate the truthmaker principle *qua* metaphysical

⁷I use 'T-ET' to designate the theory that holds that T-REL is ET, and 'T-ET-ist' to designate those theorists who believe T-ET. I use a similar abbreviation-scheme throughout, for example, 'T-NEC' similarly designates the theory which holds that T-REL is NEC.

principle head on.⁸ However, this understanding of TT assumes that *truthmaker necessitarianism* (T-NEC) is the only view of TT or that TT must be a metaphysically substantial view, giving only metaphysically substantial TMKs, usually considered to be states of affairs (SOAs), or some other complex, structured, supposedly existing *entity*.

My aim is to understand the enterprise of TT completely differently, as the basic enterprise of giving an account of the *relation* between truth and reality. BATT must strip itself of this metaphysical substantiality and only include it if it is *necessary* to give an account of the nature of T-REL. If an account that *goes beyond* BATT can be persuasive without building in such metaphysically substantial commitments (for instance, without having to accept T-NEC⁹ or without having to accept SOAs as TMKs), then I think such a view should be favoured over others, even at the expense of rejecting orthodoxy. This is a cornerstone both of my generally *modest proposal* for TT, and the reason why my preferred version of TT and account of TMKs should be favoured. TMKs should be construed as *metaphysically modest* as opposed to the orthodoxy which usually just starts off from the position that TT must be *metaphysically substantial*, or as I shall put it, *metaphysically immodest* or *extravagant*.

An important part of this *metaphysical modesty* is that the term ‘being’ needs to be understood in an unrestrictive way to capture what I take to be the variety of *modes of being*. Thus, I am not only speaking about *being* as Bigelow understands it when he says that “the essence of Truthmaker, I urge, is the idea that truth is supervenient on being: that you could not have any difference in what things are true unless there were some difference in what things exist” (1988: 132).¹⁰ Beebe and Dodd [2005a: 4] understand Bigelow’s view of *being* here as truth supervening on “whether things are.”¹¹ Rather, the right, less ontologically immodest understanding of *being* requires us to understand

⁸This is Dodd’s phrase (Dodd and Friend 2014: 3 and 7; from the examiners’ report).

⁹I do not stand alone in rejecting NEC. Mellor (2003: 213), for instance, does not think that NEC is necessary for truthmaking. I shall argue in §2.9 that my favoured account can reject NEC altogether. In fact, my skeptical sympathies lead me to reject or at least avoid any blanket acceptance of necessary connections of any sort. I still consider my view to be a version of TT however. The truthmaker enterprise should not just assume from the start that some mysterious and unsavoury metaphysical relations such as necessary connections exist and that the relation between truth and reality is such a relation. Any motivation for such a view must be built from the ground up, if at all. However, I agree with Liggins (2008) among others, that the TT-enterprise, construed as only including such metaphysically immodest views, is impossible to motivate (see especially [Beebe and Dodd 2005b] for a collection of essays most of which are skeptical of TT, but as I see it, are skeptical not of TT, but of the metaphysical immodesty of most versions of TT). BATT and the view I articulate which *goes beyond* BATT retain the modesty I think is essential to TT (and for philosophy in general). This will become clearer in §2.9, §4, and elsewhere.

¹⁰See also (Bigelow 1996: 38), where he clearly states that his preferred way of putting things on which “truth supervenes on being” (ibid.) is a way of expressing the truthmaker principle.

¹¹However, as I shall touch on in §4.1.2, Bigelow (1988: 158–165) clearly contrasts what he takes to be the Truthmaker axiom with what he takes to be an “alternative” (ibid.: 159) strategy: second-order quantification. He thinks that to take second-order quantification seriously, we need to distinguish between second-order claims which are about “*somehow* that things are” (ibid.: 164; my italics) and first-order claims “that *there are* some further entities, however called” (ibid.). My suggestion concerning ‘being’ is that a TT-ist can just as well consider the *ways things are* to be part of TMKs without thinking of such *ways things are* as further entities over and above the entities which are those ways.

the basic TT claim as truth supervening on *how things are*. See (Dodd 2002a: 73–81) who argues for this important point, which I shall discuss in more depth in §4.1. Thus, ‘being’ must be at least open to be understood as not just *whether things are* but also *how things are*. Beebe and Dodd say that it is a “moot point whether this weaker supervenience claim deserves to be regarded as a variant of truthmaker theory” (ibid.: 4). However, in the spirit of non-skepticism, I shall assume that it is crucial and important that it is regarded as a variant of TT.¹² Whether or not all TT-ists would accept such an ontologically neutral and *modest* view of *being*, I consider it a basic assumption of the basic account of TT, which in my eyes, must remain as neutral as possible.

1.3 A Note on the Nature of TBRs: *Tolerance*

BATT should be *agnostic* and generally neutral about the *nature* of both TBRs and TMKs. In fact, I do not see why BATT should not be compatible with rejecting the claim that there is a nature to TMKs and TBRs at all. BATT should be compatible with and leave open a *pluralism* about TMKs and TBRs where there is no specific nature that all TMKs or all TBRs share (what unites them is that they are sometimes *externally related* in certain, similar ways¹³). Of course, the right, full version of TT might have to give a full account of what the TBRs and TMKs are. However, I have already made it clear (in §0.2) that my aim is not to defend TT against TT-skepticism.¹⁴

¹²See (Rodriguez-Pereyra 2005: 20), who also construes Dodd’s point in this way, when he says, “although Dodd rejects that truth supervenes upon whether things are, he accepts that truth supervenes upon how things are” (ibid.). We’ll take the latter, *weaker* supervenience claim, to be a variant, and indeed a much more convincing variant, of TT. Elsewhere, Rodriguez-Pereyra assumes that those who take “truth [to be] grounded not in entities but in how entities are [...] believe in truthmaking but not in truthmakers” (2006b: 186). Further, Rodriguez-Pereyra (2005: 24f) argues that *how things are with things* needs to be reified, that is, construed as entities. See Hornsby (2005: 40f) for a response. Rodriguez-Pereyra’s stance, I assume, straddles TT with *strong metaphysical assumptions* about the nature of TMKs which make TT implausible and rules out views which, as I describe in §1.7, do not have such strong assumptions about the nature of TMKs. Thus, in the spirit of modesty, plausibility, and pluralism, I reject this assumed contrast. I say more about this in §4.1. On the basic account, whatever has *being*—and not only entities—can be a TMK.

¹³I think that it is fair to say that most TT-ists follow Armstrong (2004: 9) in thinking that T-REL is an internal relation, such that the essences of TMKs-qua-TMKs and true TBRs-qua-TBRs are in part constituted by the relation they have with each other. Or as Armstrong understands this notion, a relation is internal if “given just the terms of the relation, the relation between them is necessitated” (ibid.). I think that BATT should leave this *open*, as this is a substantial metaphysical assumption. Armstrong suggests that it is “an attractive ontological hypothesis that such a relation is no addition to being” (ibid.). I do not see how having internal relations understood in this necessitating way, or in fact in any way at all, is “no addition to being” if the relation indeed *exists* whenever the relata exist (that some relation coincides necessarily with its relata does not mean that it is no addition to being), nor do I see how it is at all an “*attractive* ontological hypothesis” (ibid.; my emphasis) rather than a flagrantly immodest one.

¹⁴See MacBride (2014: §0) who points out that TT must answer these five questions to defend it against TT-skepticism: (1) What is it to be a TMK?; (2) What range of truths have TMKs?; (3) What is the ontological nature of the entities that are TMKs?; (4) What are the TBRs?; (5) What motivates TT? I say *some* things to address each of these questions throughout the dissertation. However, because I am not addressing the skeptic but rather presenting my favoured views as an attempt to do some *in-house housecleaning*, I do not have to say more than is necessary for this aim. Nevertheless,

I shall now focus on TBRs, and, in §1.7, on TMKs. Overall, there is no consensus as to what the nature of TBRs is. Kirkham (1992: 59–64) argues for a “tolerant attitude about truth bearers” (ibid.: 59). According to this tolerant attitude “there is no ‘correct’ answer to the question of what kind of thing can possess truth values. The matter is one of *choice*, not discovery” (ibid.). He explains that there is a great variety of kinds of entities which philosophers have claimed to be the right kind of entity to bear truth:

Among the candidates are beliefs, propositions, judgments, assertions, statements, theories, remarks, ideas, acts of thought, utterances, sentence tokens, sentence types, sentences (unspecified), and speech acts.^[15] Even if all philosophers reached sufficient agreement to identify by name the one right bearer of truth, our problems would hardly be at an end, for there is also disagreement about the nature of the things named by each of these terms. One person’s idea of a sentence may be different from the next person’s. [ibid.: 54]

Given the considerable disagreement about the nature of TBRs amongst both TT-ists and other theorists concerned with truth, let alone those philosophers such as Platts (1997: 33–35, 37–42) who argue that the issue is philosophically uninteresting, I think that BATT would need to remain agnostic about the nature of the right TBRs. TT-ists of various persuasions can take a variety of different routes with regard to the nature of TBRs. One may side with the Quineans and think that it is “madness” (ibid.: 38) to take a philosophical term of art such as propositions as TBRs, considering them as “dubious things at best” (ibid.: 40). (As a good Quinean in this regard, Platts [ibid.: 40] tentatively takes relativised sentences to be the main TBRs.) Or, one might side with Armstrong (2004: 12ff), as is popular amongst TT-ists, who also only tentatively takes *propositions* to be what he calls the “primary” TBRs; he calls them “primary” as he thinks other entities such as sentences are also TBRs but only derivatively by expressing propositions.¹⁶ Or, one may side with Kirkham who takes a skeptical though permissive stance, claiming that it is just a matter of choice and thus completely arbitrary which

it will turn out that my favoured version of TT as a metaphysically *modest* view can also be seen as constituting further skeptical challenges to the more metaphysically substantial views. In short, the overall plausibility of my account is an extended argument against metaphysically immodest TT-ists’ ability to answer MacBride’s questions in the way that they would like, and generally think they can.

¹⁵Even this extensive list is missing at least one other candidate, namely *thoughts*. See Fumerton (2002: 13ff; 2010: 92ff) for such an account and (2002: 42ff) for what Fumerton thinks thoughts are. Interestingly, his account is adamantly *realist* (2002: §1; and 2010: §3) but maintains that thoughts (as TBRs) play a “robust role” (2010: 91) in “creating truth” (ibid.: 91f) in “partnership” (ibid.: 97) with TMKs. The robust role is summarised as “introducing the possibility of correspondence[;] [i]t is only because an object can correspond or fail to correspond to some thought of triangularity that it is true that the object is a triangle” (ibid.). On my aboutness account (see §2), I similarly take TBRs to have a central, partnership role in truthmaking, which is captured by the idea that truths are *about* their potential TMKs and which I shall later call the duality of truthmaking and aboutness (§2.3). Fumerton’s idea is slightly different. But, that TBRs introduce the possibility of truthmaking, especially in my way of describing the partnership, is compatible with TBRs being not just thoughts but many or any of the TBRs on this list; in short, my view is that the aboutness of the TBRs ensures that the TBRs can be made true by their TMKs, and all of the TBRs on the list can be relevantly about their TMKs (see §2.4.2.1–2.4.2.7 for further discussion).

¹⁶To complicate things further, David (2005: 156–159) makes clear a very unsettling fact for those

TBRs one takes to be right or primary.¹⁷ But what is clear is that given this tentativeness and lack of agreement about the nature of TBRs, BATT should remain agnostic and consider one or the other TBRs as the one to speak about only as a matter of easing one's exposition of more important matters. BATT has only one TBR requirement:

Truthbearer Requirement (R-TBR): one of the relata of T-REL is a TBR and must be truth-apt, and when properly related to a TMK is made true by that TMK.

Whatever a TBR is, according to TT when it is related by T-REL to a TMK, then it is true, and whenever a TMK is related to something by T-REL and hence makes it true, that thing must be a TBR. R-TBR is a requirement which complements the requirement that T-REL is not purely logical (see §1.2.1) for it states that at least one of the relata must be a TBR. And as far as I can see, this is the only requirement on TBRs that is essential to BATT.

1.4 The Relations-come-easy view of Relations

In the way that I understand them, relations are kinds of properties.¹⁸ They are distinguished from other properties that we call "*monadic properties*," which are instantiated by one object at a time, by the fact that they come in degrees larger than one, meaning that they are instantiated by more than one object at a time. Relations, by contrast to monadic properties, are properties which can take on an "adicity" or "arity" of more than one. We sometimes talk about relations having places, where objects can be. For instance *love* is a relation with adicity of two in that it is a two-place relation which relates one object, say Jon, to a second object, say Mary. This relation is not reflexive in that even though Jon can love himself, he might not, and it is generally non-symmetric in that if Jon loves Mary, it is not necessarily the case that Mary loves Jon (making it not symmetric) even though sometimes the sentiment is reciprocal (making it not asymmetric).

who follow Armstrong in his TT. Armstrong, as a good Naturalist, does not even believe in propositions. Armstrong writes, "no Naturalist can be happy with a realm of propositions. [...] [They are not] to be taken with metaphysical seriousness" (1997: 131; David [2005: 156] discusses this quote). Instead, he thinks that talk of propositions is a way of typing token beliefs and thoughts (David *ibid.*). Armstrong writes, "What exists are classes of intentionally equivalent tokens. The *fundamental* correspondence, therefore, is not between entities called truths and their truthmakers, but between the token beliefs and thoughts on the one hand, and truthmakers on the other" (1997: 131). This is most problematic for Armstrongians, as David argues, because taking token beliefs and thoughts as primary TBRs makes us reject the idea that T-REL is an internal relation which relates TBRs essentially or necessarily with their TMKs. This, I think, is because token beliefs will stay the same *token* beliefs even if *what they are about* changes (see §2.9 below for further discussion). This would be a major problem for Armstrongians because it means that not even Armstrong would accept T-NEC when pressed. See especially (David *ibid.*: 158–9). Later, I reject T-NEC (§2.8) and claim that Armstrong's insistence on NEC being essential to TT is metaphysically immodest (§2.9).

¹⁷Just as another example, Mumford (2007: 45) is also explicit about his TBR-*neutrality*.

¹⁸It is also standard to take monadic properties to be unary relations, and hence to take properties to be kinds of relations. If one prefers this understanding of relations, then please read what I say here in that way; nothing I say about the *relations-come-easy view* will be affected.

In this dissertation, I assume what I call the *relations-come-easy* view of relations. What I mean by this is that any being (including an entity such as an object and also other kinds of beings such as properties¹⁹) that can be grouped together with itself or with others in *some way* is *related* to itself or those other beings in *some way*.

Let's look at some examples. As we know, *identity* is a relation. *Constitution* is a relation. *Being closer to* is a relation. And, logical relations such as *entailment* are also relations. That logical connections are also relations is accepted in the way that many people talk about them. For one, Bigelow (1988), who rejects talk of 'virtue' as unhelpful, claims that "[t]he 'making' in 'making true' is essentially logical entailment" (ibid.: 125) and "I suppose that entailment is to be a *relation* between propositions (whatever they are)" (ibid.: 126; my emphasis²⁰).

I shall assume that explanatory relations such as *conceptually explains* are also relations. For conceptual explanation also signifies *some sort of relation* between explanans and explanandum. Whenever X explains Y, there is a relation of explanatoriness between X and Y, whether the explanation is that of conceptual explanation, causal explanation, or any other explanation. One may talk about 'because' and 'in virtue of' as connectives similar to 'and', albeit as non-truth-functional ones. Connectives merely combine sentences to make new sentences. One *may* interpret connectives, then, as merely *connecting* sentences *without relating* them. Relations are normally thought to be the semantic values of predicates, which take designators to form sentences, and not the semantic values of connectives, which take sentences to form complex sentences. There is indeed a grammatical difference between connectives and predicates, and hence relations.

But, on the *relations-come-easy* view, any sort of grouping of one or more entities, including linguistic entities such as sentences, marks the presence of some relation between them. In the explanatory case, where X explains Y, X and Y are grouped in *some way* and are hence *related* in some way. The explanation purports to describe *some sort of relation* between explanans and explanandum, even if formally or grammatically they are not connected by predicates but by connectives. Describing the explanation further as a *conceptual* explanation merely further specifies the explanatory relation that holds between X and Y.²¹ Part of the TT-project is to make clear what the relation is that is marked by a certain asymmetry that holds between TBRs and TMKs. I shall assume that there is no reason to exclude logical relations and logical groupings from the set of all relations, but I shall also assume, as I stated in §1.2.1, that T-REL is some sort of non-purely logical relation, for T-REL generally relates truth-apt entities of various sorts

¹⁹I include other properties here, for properties can also be related to each other. For instance the property *being red-7* is related to the property *being red-8* at least in one way, that is, by the relation *being lighter than*.

²⁰Be aware, when quoting, I normally only say when I have added emphasis. Only when I think that the emphasis is striking do I mention that the quoted author added emphasis.

²¹I say more about these matters in Appendix 1, where I discuss Künne's useful distinctions on this issue. But, what I say here should be sufficient. A further discussion and defense of the relations-come-easy view here would be to engage with the TT-skeptic, and as I stated, this is not my aim.

when they are true to mostly non-truth-apt entities of various sorts and how things are with those entities.

What I say about TT is compatible with at least one reading of Dummett's Principle C (Dummett 1976: 53, 51–55), VIRTUE,²² and Künne's Schema P (Künne 2003: 150), namely the "ontic reading" (ibid.: 158–165). But, if we accept the *relations-come-easy* view of relations, *truthmaking's being a relation* is also compatible with what Künne calls the "propositional reading" (ibid.: 154–157, 165–169), on which truthmaking is just conceptual explanation.²³ The details of these alternative and subtle ways of understanding TT, which purport to raise *skepticism* towards the view that truthmaking is a relation, is not essential to the dissertation. In Appendix 1, I present a more in-depth discussion of Dummett and especially Künne.

1.5 TT and the Correspondence Theory of Truth

TTs are also taken by some philosophers to be closely related to what are called *correspondence theories of truth* (CTs). For instance, David (2009) claims, "One feels that there is a natural kinship between the two" (ibid.: 137). Perhaps the simplest version of CT captures the *truth-property* with a generalised biconditional:

CORRESPONDENCE: a proposition is true iff it corresponds with a fact (or object or other kind of entity).²⁴

So, when a proposition does not correspond with a fact, then the proposition is false (or at least, not true). Correspondence is clearly also meant to be a relation that holds between a fact and a *true* proposition. And the facts to which true propositions correspond are elements in reality to which these propositions are properly related when they are true.²⁵ Thus, the basic claim of CT is that there is a relation of correspondence that holds between propositions when they are true and some fact. Perhaps this correspondence relation is nothing more than a mere correlation between truths and reality, but perhaps

²²I follow Sundholm who states that Dummett's Principle C ('C' is short for 'correspondence') or VIRTUE is "clearly nothing but a formulation of a truth-maker condition on truth" (1994: 123–4).

²³I won't go into the details of this here, but the propositional reading is unacceptable to BATT-ists for other reasons, that is, it violates R-ROT (§1.2.1).

²⁴According to David (2009), this captures the basic idea behind correspondence, for all CT-ists. Specifically, see (David ibid.: 143–144) to see how other versions of the theory that, importantly, do not use a generalised biconditional are implausible. This basic form doesn't make a claim about the nature of *facts*. I added the parentheses to include other categories and other forms of correspondence that are not fact-based, but object-based, event-based, or based on other kinds of entities, which are taken to play the role of correspondent. See (Künne 2003: §3) for an in-depth discussion of the difference between object-based and fact-based versions of CT. I shall leave off the brackets and speak just of facts for brevity. Also, as is standard, 'iff' stands for 'if and only if'.

²⁵This remark assumes that the correspondents of true propositions are *elements in reality*. Though, one *might try* to reject this assumption. For example, one might try to do this by construing facts as (other) true propositions. However, as long as propositions are real, the facts to which they correspond (even construed as true propositions themselves) are elements of reality. I assume that true propositions corresponding to *some kind of elements in reality* is central to the relevant notion of correspondence.

the relation is slightly more substantial than a mere correlation. I assume that a central, basic claim of CT is that there is *some sort* of relation between truths and reality.

It is clear that CTs seem to share a commitment to T-REL with TT.²⁶ However, it is important to distinguish CTs from TTs, because CTs generally come with many more commitments than those accepted by BATT. That TT strips away the additional, and to some problematic, commitments of CT is summed up by Oliver, “The truth-maker principle is a sanitised version of a correspondence theory of truth” (1996: 69), and Dummett:

Baffled by the attempt to describe in general the relation between language and reality, we have nowadays abandoned the correspondence theory of truth [...] Nevertheless the correspondence theory expresses one important feature of the concept of truth which is not expressed by the law “It is true that *p* if and only if *p*” and which we have so far left quite out of account: that a statement is true only if there is something in the world *in virtue of* which it is true. [1959: 14; my emphasis]

Let’s read Oliver and Dummett as making or implying the good point that CT and TT are distinct because TT strips down and sanitizes CT.

Here is a potential counterexample to the claim that CT and TT are the same. A certain version of CT might hold that some TBRs can have multiple TMKs but can only have one single, specific correspondent. This would be a version of CT which clearly distinguishes the TMKs, one of the relata in the *truthmaking* relation, from correspondents, which would be considered relata of a different *correspondence* relation. I don’t see why this is not a possible pair of views to hold.

Amongst CT-ists, there is no consensus on what the right notion of correspondence is; no specific explication is common to all accounts. For example, the notion of correspondence can be interpreted almost spatially as stating a kind of isomorphism between the spatial structure of the corresponding worldly facts, and the grammatical form of the truthbearing sentence; facts or SOAs have some structure *S* which is isomorphic with the structure of sentences. CTs do not always have this assumption about isomorphic correspondence, however. Even though there is similarly no consensus concerning T-REL, some TT-ists *extravagantly* accept this isomorphism by positing SOAs as TMKs.

However, even according to Armstrong (2004: 16–17; 2010: 62), who posits SOAs as the TMKs for most truths (2004: 48–49), the central difference between CT and TT is that TT expands the relevant truth-to-reality relation to include not only one-

²⁶I shall not go too deeply into the debate about whether CT is in fact closely related to TT. However, David (2009) makes a strong case for thinking that correspondence is symmetric (ibid.: 138–147) while T-REL is supposed to be *asymmetric* (ibid.: 146); though David also questions whether T-REL is in fact *asymmetric* (ibid.: 152–154). David also covers other potential similarities and differences between correspondence and T-REL, illustrating that understanding the connection between the two is a very thorny matter. I shall assume that at least some versions of CT take correspondence to be *asymmetric*, and that according to TT, T-REL is *asymmetric* in the relevant sense as well.

to-one correspondence relations but one-to-many and many-to-many correspondence.²⁷ According to him, one of the hallmarks of T-RELS, which distinguishes them from correspondence relations that on the CT are taken to be only one-to-one, is that they can be one-to-many and many-to-many.

The way that I shall understand TT, however, is that it consists in the aspect of any theory that makes a claim about the presence and nature of a particular relation between truth and reality, where the *asymmetry* is understood as going from reality-to-truth, rather than truth-to-reality. Thus, whatever the relation between CT and TT, it is clear that CT contains a version of TT insofar as it makes claims about the presence and nature of an *asymmetric* relation between truths and reality, however the nature of this relation is cashed out.

1.6 TT and Theories of Truth

One complication for the relation between CT and TT, which I shall now discuss, is a general concern about the relation between TTs and *theories of truth* (ToTs). In my understanding of the relation between TT and ToTs, TT and CT are two separate theories with distinct aims.²⁸ CT is a version of a ToT. TT is not. TT does not try to account for the *nature of truth* and only tries to account for the *relation* between truths and reality. TT is a theory *in part about* truth, which is distinct from a theory *of* truth.

Because CT tries to give an account of the nature of truth and not just the relation between truth and reality, it tries to do more than TT, making the latter not a version of the former.

Also, since CT attempts to account for the *nature of truth*, the right-hand side of the biconditional for a version of CT, or any ToT, cannot mention truth or contain the word 'true'. Because TT merely gives an account of the relation between truth and reality, it does not have this restriction. Recall

(TM): *p* is true if something makes it true.

TM has 'true' on the right-hand side, which is allowable for a statement of TT but not for any version of CT or any ToT. So, TT is not a ToT.

There is no need for us to expand on the reasons for distinguishing TT from CT beyond what I have done now. So, I shall from now on leave aside discussion of CT.

However, this argument about the relation between TT and ToT is illuminating for other reasons as well. TT is clearly not a version of CT for the reason that TT is not

²⁷Coincidentally, Armstrong (2004: 16) argues that TT (and even Horwich's Minimalism) is preferable to CT because although CT is "quite similar" (ibid.) to TT, by positing one-one correspondence relations, it is a "metaphysically very extravagant theory" (ibid.). This is relevant because I argue especially in §4.1.2 that the version of TT presented by Armstrong, though perhaps less metaphysically extravagant than CT, is still too extravagant.

²⁸See also Merricks (2007: 15).

a ToT, while CT is. But, a further, interesting question arises about how TT relates to the main rivals of CT, namely the coherence theory of truth (COT), the pragmatic theory of truth (POT), the identity theory of truth (IOT), and the various forms of deflationism such as Minimalism. Discussing these in depth will lead my discussion too far off-track. However, the general point that TT is not a version of ToT should give us strong reason to think that none of these views threaten or are rivals to TT. All of these views are versions of a ToT, or, in the case of deflationism and Minimalism, versions of ToT-skepticism. They only threaten TT insofar as the version of each of these views attempts to deny that there is a relation between truths and reality. And it is very unclear that a commitment to any of these views constitutes such a denial. COT-ists, for example, can accept that there's a relation between truths and aspects of reality which make them true; this reality just happens to be other true TBRs or a network of other truths. In what follows, I make this point discussing the POT-ist, IOT-ist, and deflationist.

1.6.1 Example 1: *TT is Compatible with Pragmatism & Rejecting T-NEC*

James (1909: §8) writes that pragmatists and what he calls “intellectualists” both agree that truth is “agreement, as falsity is disagreement, with reality” (1909: 823). They differ in what account of TMKs is given. James clearly presents a TT-POT, which claims that TBRs are made true by things *outside* of TBRs, when he writes:

The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth *happens* to an idea. It *becomes* true, is *made* true by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process, the process namely of its verifying itself, its *verification*. Its validity is the process of its *validation*. [ibid.; his emphases]

This captures the central assumptions of BATT (especially T-REL-C, §1.2). Pihlström (2009: especially 15–33) sums up his contemporary version of TT-POT thus,

It is, then, the pragmatic efficacy of our beliefs about the world that makes (in a broadly interpreted sense) those beliefs true, by making us able to orientate in the world they are about. [ibid.: 30]

POT-ists can *build* a version of TT by fleshing out an account of the nature of TMKs in terms of what they call the “pragmatic efficacy of our beliefs” thus:

POT in terms of TT (TT-POT): any TBR, *p*, is true iff there is a TMK *x* and *p* is pragmatically efficacious for subject *S* who utters, thinks, believes (etc.) *p* as a result of *x*.²⁹

²⁹Obviously, this is just one way to try to articulate TT in terms of POT.

As long as the POT-ist can accept the basic features of BATT, POT and TT are compatible. As we have clearly seen in this section, POT-ists can attempt to flesh out their own version of TT. Any candidate version of BATT must accommodate this fact.

Not only does TT-POT give a pragmatic account of TMKs but it understands T-REL itself in terms of *pragmatic efficacy* rather than the dominant account in terms of *necessitation* (NEC). Pihlström writes,

This is a further consideration in favor of pragmatism, to be added to the unclarity and sheer implausibility of the metaphysical realist's postulation of mysterious cross-categorical *necessitating* relations (etc.) in order to explain our perfectly ordinary concepts of truth and the world. [2009: 30; my emphasis]

Pihlström writes that TT-POT is not committed to truths being eternally true nor to a “timeless, abstract, unchanging relation eternally obtaining between a true idea and something that exists independently of it” (2009: 19). If we accept the natural thought that TBRs can change in terms of truth-value, then we can reject T-NEC, the view that T-REL is a necessitation relation.

To reject NEC, one needs to accept the idea that truths are connected to their TMKs in such a way that it is still possible that (1) the TBR exists and (2) the usually corresponding TMK, to which the TBR has a necessitation relation, exists, but (3) the TBR is false (or not true). According to James, the TMKs are most plausibly construed as acts of verification. Such acts of verification are related to ideas, which bear the property true, by T-REL; that is, the idea is true if and only if the verification of that idea is pragmatically “expedient in the way of our thinking”³⁰ (1909: 824). On this account, (1) the TBR can exist and (2) its usually corresponding TMK(s) exist, but (3) the TBR is not true, if for instance the TBR and the TMKs are not pragmatically expedient for *S* in the circumstances. So, NEC can be rejected.³¹

1.6.2 Example 2: *TT is Compatible with Some Versions of the Identity Theory of Truth*

Even certain versions of IOT are compatible with TT. In fact, some IOT-ists explicitly put their theory in terms of truthmaking. Candlish and Damnjanovic articulate IOT explicitly in terms of truthmaking when they say:

The simplest and most general statement of the identity theory of truth is that when a truth-bearer (e.g., a proposition) *is true*, there is a truthmaker

³⁰James defines his terms thus: “What does agreement with reality mean? It means verifiability. Verifiability means ability to guide us prosperously through experience” (1907: 484). This is also congenial to what other pragmatists think. See for instance, (Dewey 1920: 169–71; and 1916: 98–115).

³¹I argue similarly but in terms of *aboutness* rather than *expediency* in §2.8–2.9.

(e.g., a fact) with which it is identical and the truth of the former *consists* in its identity with the latter. [2011: §0]

Thus, the simplest and most general statement of the theory can be put thus:

IOT in terms of TT (TT-IOT): any TBR, p , is true iff there is a TMK x and p is identical with x .

It is clear that one can formulate IOT in terms of truthmaking. Hence, IOT and TT are, at least *prima facie*, compatible.³²

1.6.3 Example 3: *TT is Compatible with Non-Substantive Theories of Truth*

Minimalism, deflationism, and other non-substantive theories (NSTs) which state that truth has no (*substantial*) *nature* and which, as David states, are better understood as “antitheor[ies] of truth” (1994: 3), are also compatible with TT.³³ In fact, Horwich, the Minimalist, writes:

[Minimalism] does not deny that truths *do* correspond—in *some* sense—to the facts; it acknowledges that statements owe their truth to the nature of reality; and it does not dispute the existence of relationships between truth, reference, and predicate satisfaction. Thus we might hope to accommodate much of what the correspondence theorist wishes to say without retreating an inch from our deflationary position. [1998: 104–5]

Horwich thinks that Minimalism and deflationism are compatible with what he calls the “correspondence intuition” (ibid.: 104), and thereby with TT. What such views reject is the idea that *truth* has any *substantive nature*. They do not necessarily deny that there is any *relation* between truths and reality or that truths are in some sense made true, or, to use Horwich’s phrase (above), “owe their truth to the nature of reality” (ibid.). Thus, (ToT-skeptical) NSTs are, at least *prima facie*, compatible with TT.

³²Of course, other IOT-ists might reject this picture. For example, (Candlish 1999: 200–201, 213) thinks that IOT should not be put in terms of an identity between TBRs and TMKs because talking in this way already seems to imply some sort of distinction between TBRs and TMKs, when what IOT-ists believe is that they are identical. See also (Gaskin 2015: §3) for discussion. My response to this is that *identity* is clearly a relation. So, however unsettling it is to talk about TBRs and TMKs separately, IOT-ists must posit some sort of an *identity*, and, whether they want to call the relata TBRs and TMKs or something else, they seem to be providing some sort of account of T-REL, making even such IOTs potentially compatible with BATT.

³³I call it this only because it has become common to call deflationary theories non-substantive theories of truth. But see (Asay 2014), who argues that “there is no metaphysically substantive property of truth” (ibid.: 147). He argues against what he calls “metaphysical substantivism” about truth on which “the property of truth is a sparse (non-abundant) property, regardless of how one understands the nature of sparse properties (as universals, tropes, or natural classes)” (ibid.). He argues that if we posit such a property, then we are left with a contradictory or unmotivated view. But he also argues that although the *property truth* is metaphysically deflationary, this fully respects the metaphysical ambitions of TT. Asay’s (2014) arguments lend support to the overall point I am making here that TT is compatible with deflationism.

1.6.4 Conclusion: *TT's Compatibility with Most ToTs and Anti-ToTs*

In conclusion, it is clear that TT is compatible with various ToTs and anti-ToTs, and not just CT, the view it has been most associated with. This is because ToTs and TT have distinct aims, respectively, to account for the *nature of truth* and to account for the *nature of the relation between truth and reality*.

Further, theorists with all sorts of leanings which lead them to specific versions of ToT (e.g. COT-ists, POT-ists, CT-ists, IOT-ists)³⁴ can try to move beyond their ToT and try to build a corresponding version of TT. BATT, which is captured by commitments to TM, T-REL-C, and TD, is compatible with a great variety of different ToTs. Pragmatists, coherentists, correspondence theorists, identity theorists, can try to build versions of TT by adding a specific story, most fruitfully, about either the nature of the T-REL or the nature of TMKs. Whether such views can be made to be *plausible* accounts of TT is another matter.

1.7 A Note on the Nature of TMKs: *Pluralism*

In §1.3, we saw that no metaphysically detailed account of the nature of TBRs is essential to TT and that BATT should be neutral about the nature of TBRs. In this section, I shall make plausible the analogous claim that BATT can also be neutral about the nature of TMKs; that is there is no specific, metaphysically detailed account of the nature of TMKs which is essential to TT.

Many disparate philosophical tendencies can not only articulate alternative ToTs, but, as we saw in §1.6, they should also be able to build their own versions of TT by *going beyond* BATT. So, BATT should be incompatible with them. Thus, BATT should be neutral about the nature of TMKs.

The pragmatist, coherentist, identity theorist, correspondence theorist, or any other theorist with a particular philosophical leaning can try to build their own version of TT.³⁵

³⁴Another noteworthy alternative, which I don't have space to discuss in depth, is (Asay 2012) which as he says, "explore[s] the possibility of *projectivist* truthmaking, and show[s] how it makes sense of quasi-realism" (ibid.: 373). My claim in this section is merely that all these options are indeed available to explore, and BATT must make room for such exploration.

³⁵As should be clear by the end of this section, and also by the end of §7 where I argue for this in more detail, I take TT to be compatible with most forms of anti-realism. Blackburn has a nice list of the various competitors to realism: "Realists are contrasted with a variety of alleged opponents: reductionsists, idealists, instrumentalists, pragmatists, verificationists, internalists, neo-Wittgensteinian neutralists, and no doubt others" (1984: 145). To this list, Asay helpfully adds: "quietists, expressivists, fictionalists, nominalists, semantic anti-realists, conventionalists, non-cognitivists, constructivists, relativists, intuitionists, subjectivists, quasi-realists, non-factualists, error theorists, and probably still others" (2012: 391–392). I do not claim that all of these views, which are said to be competitors to realism, are compatible with TT. In Appendix 5, I argue that certain versions of anti-realism have problematic consequences when they adopt TT. In this section I argue that TT is compatible with a variety of philosophical views.

This will most often take the form of articulating metaphysical commitments concerning the nature of TMKs (and sometimes also of T-REL³⁶). These versions can differ from each other in so far as they will restrict their theory of the nature of TMKs (or T-REL) in their preferred way. For instance, a pragmatist can attempt to give an account of the TMKs in terms of the utility or pragmatic expediency of the truths for some subject *S*, while a coherentist might claim that all TMKs are webs of other TBRs.

Of course, different theorists with *similar* philosophical leanings might also differ in their account of the TMKs. One coherentist TT-ist might take the TMKs to be webs of beliefs, while another might take the TMKs to be webs of propositions, while yet another might be pluralist and take the TMKs to be webs of beliefs, propositions, and other TBRs.

TT-ists with the same general philosophical leanings can also differ in terms of what one might call the *categorical ontology* of TMKs. For instance, as we saw in §1.6.1, James can plausibly be interpreted as thinking that the TMKs are *acts of verification which are pragmatically expedient*. James talks about the things which make ideas true as being “events” or “processes” (1909: 823) as acts undoubtedly are.³⁷ This specification is a specification of the *ontological category* of the TMKs. Another pragmatist

³⁶See, for instance, Livet who seems to understand the anti-realists’ understanding of T-REL as a strengthening of “epistemic accessibility” (2014: 101). It is suggested that consideration of the anti-realist has consequences on the nature of the connection between TBRs and TMKs, making the “attachment of the truthmaker doctrine to a stronger and more intimate tie than the one of a relation” (ibid.) which Livet attributes to Mulligan (2007) as “the tie of essence” (Livet ibid.: 99; Mulligan ibid.: 8). My relations-come-easy view does not distinguish between ties and relations. For another good example, see (Asay 2012: §5, especially 383–385) where he engages in what he calls the “tricky business” (ibid.: 382) of correctly categorizing quasi-realism as an anti-realist view. The mark of quasi-realism is that it tries, as he concisely describes it, to “mimic realism even so far as to say that our moral judgments are made true by the mind-independent features of the natural world” (ibid.: 384). Despite Blackburn’s hostility towards TT (see [1987: 119–120] and [2009: 207]), Asay clearly argues that quasi-realists can embrace TT, and that TT can in fact make clear how quasi-realism is different from other forms of anti-realism and in particular does not collapse into subjectivism. The strategy is to say that quasi-realists will give an *anti-realist* account *not* of the TMKs for moral judgments, but rather of the *truthmaking relation* which relates these judgments with their TMKs. In effect, the quasi-realist can give a *realist* account of the TMKs, for instance, by claiming that there are natural, mind-independent TMKs for moral judgments (2012: 384). What makes her an anti-realist, according to Asay, is that some natural TMK *N* makes true TBR *p* by *N*’s playing the TMK-role towards *p* in an anti-realist way. As Asay says, “*N* is a [TMK] for *p* because of our practices of projection, not because of their *de re* modal features. Quasi-realists, I’m arguing, should locate the mind-dependence relevant to ethical thought inside the truthmaking relation itself, and not the [TMKs]” (ibid.). This is a clear way that the quasi-realist can argue that her view does not collapse into subjectivism, which presumably would give a subjectivist account of the TMKs, not of T-REL. My main aim in this footnote is to illustrate that versions of anti-realism are compatible with TT, not just by giving an anti-realist account of TMKs, but also by giving an anti-realist account of T-REL. Recall also that in §1.6.1, I argued that one can understand TT-POT as also giving an alternative account of T-REL, and not just of TMKs. In what follows I mostly talk about anti-realisms which give an anti-realist account of the nature of TMKs, but the general points I make also apply to anti-realisms which are best articulated by giving an anti-realist account of the nature of T-REL.

³⁷I am not endorsing James’s view here. Rather, I am arguing that its details are generally compatible with BATT. In Appendix 5, I discuss arguments against verificationist views on *aboutness grounds*. One might also object to such a view by saying that there are truths that no-one has verified at all. I shall not explore how the verificationist would respond to worries such as these.

might try to build their TT along other *categorical* lines by claiming that TMKs are not acts, processes or events, but rather of a different ontological category. For instance, they might think that they are *states of affairs* (SOAs, sometimes also called “Russellian facts”), understood in a way that makes them categorially different from events or processes, such as the *state of something’s being expedient*. Or instead, they might take TMKs to be instantiated or particularised properties (sometimes called “*tropes*” or “*modes*”), such as the *expediency* of some particular act.

These differences do not come from TT-commitments, based on considerations to do with truth. They come from commitments concerning what the theorists take to be the right *categorical metaphysics*. For instance, whether one thinks that the TMKs must be SOAs rather than *particularised properties* (PAPs) usually depends on independent considerations.³⁸

Some theorists, however, take TT, and in particular the account of the nature of T-REL, to have consequences for the nature of TMKs.

For instance, take a T-NEC-ist, who believes that TMKs must *necessitate* TBRs in such a way that in all possible worlds where the TMKs exist and the corresponding TBRs exist, the TBRs must be true. Such a theorist will claim that for a TBR such as the utterance by Jon’s mother, ‘Jon is a doctor’, the TMK cannot merely be the object Jon, nor merely the property *being a doctor*, but must be something that can *necessitate* the truth of that utterance. Jon cannot necessitate the truth of the utterance because Jon may not have been a doctor. So, there are possible worlds where Jon exists, the utterance exists (by being made), and the utterance is not true.

The same goes for the property *being a doctor*. The property may exist, the utterance may be made (and hence exist), but the utterance may not be true.

However, if the SOA *Jon’s being a doctor* or the (nontransferable) PAP *the doctor-ness that Jon instantiates* exists, and the utterance exists, then the utterance, it seems,

³⁸See especially (Dodd 2000: §1; and 2009) for an excellent *critical* discussion of some of these independent considerations, but also for a presentation of some of the main issues in the debate between TMKs as PAPs (non-structured entities) and TMKs as SOAs (structured, complex entities). In (2009: 331–332), he raises what he calls the “problem of instantiation,” the problem of avoiding what is commonly called Bradley’s Regress. (Dodd 2000: 8–9) also argues that the benefits of PAP over SOA are not as clear-cut as they seem. In particular, he argues that because PAPs are *transferable*, i.e. even if they are properties of one thing *a*, they might have been properties of another thing *b*, they cannot play the TMK-role. This is because a PAP such as the *F-ness* of *a* cannot guarantee the truth of *a* is *F*. According to Dodd, the PAP *a*’s *F-ness* could have been the *b*’s *F-ness* instead. Against this, Martin (2008: 44), among others, thinks that PAPs are “nontransferable” (ibid.), by which he means: “the redness or sphericity of this tomato cannot migrate to another tomato. This, in fact, is a consequence of the idea that properties are particular ways things are. The identity of a property—its being the property it is—is bound up with the identity of its possessor” (ibid.). However, Dodd argues that because we identify PAPs by the particulars which have them, i.e. we identify *a*’s *F-ness* as numerically distinct from *b*’s *F-ness* or *c*’s *F-ness*, it would be *ad hoc* to stipulate that PAPs are non-transferable. This is because all that follows from the fact that we identify PAPs in this way is that we *refer* to PAPs by means of referring to the particulars which have them, not that they are somehow linked to these particulars essentially. I think that this is an important point about PAPs, since it helps us understand why PAPs are unstructured simples while SOAs, which do have their constituent particulars *essentially*, are structured entities.

must be true. The TMK as a SOA or PAP³⁹ seems to *necessitate* the utterance where the mere existence of Jon or the property-as-universal *being a doctor* does not necessitate the truth of the utterance.

The T-NEC-ist might then try to generalise this argument by claiming that all truths have a similar structure and that this structure of TBRs gives TMKs a corresponding structure, and on this basis claim that all TMKs must be SOAs or PAPs. I'm not saying that this is how *all* T-NEC-ists would argue (and I am definitely not saying that the T-NEC-ist is right here). Armstrong, for one, would reject this generalising move. He (2004: 6) thinks that *existence* is not a property. So even though Armstrong says that "'exists' is a perfectly good predicate" (ibid.), we do not need a SOA *T's existing* to make true the proposition $\langle T \text{ exists} \rangle$.⁴⁰ All we need to play the TMK-role and to *necessitate* that proposition, according to Armstrong, is *T*. Thus, a version of TT, in this case with a specific NEC-account of T-REL, can *seem* to commit us to a particular account of the nature of TMKs. However, as we saw with Armstrong, differences can arise in the details for independent reasons (for instance, what account one gives of *existence* can have an effect on the details).

It should nonetheless be clear that this is only a consequence of a view which takes on *further assumptions* or builds into TT more commitments than those of the *basic account*. T-NEC may commit us to SOAs or PAPs to play the role of TMK for many truths. But this is an additional commitment that is not essential to BATT. The conjunction of TM, T-REL-C, TD, R-ROT, R-TBR, which make up some of the main, actual commitments of BATT does not give us any further commitments about the nature of TMKs. Thus, I think that the following is the only basic requirement about the nature of TMKs for TT:

The Truthmaker Requirement (R-TMK): one of the relata of the T-REL is a TMK, which is not always an entity that is truth-apt, and when properly related to a TBR makes true that TBR.

R-TMK is compatible with any further specification of TT in terms of pragmatism, coherentism, or whatever. R-TMK is *pluralist*, since it is compatible with TMKs having natures as claimed by the pragmatist, coherentist, etc. It is also *pluralist* in terms of *categorical ontology*. For instance, it is compatible with monistic theories of categorical ontology, such as PAP-only theories,⁴¹ SOA-only-theories,⁴² or object-only theories,

³⁹However, as I mentioned in the previous footnote, Dodd (1999: 149–50; 2000: 8–9; 2002a: 81) gives clear reasons to think that the *transferability* of PAPs makes it that PAPs cannot necessitate TBRs in the way that Mulligan, Simons, and Smith (1984) think they can.

⁴⁰I only use the example of propositions here because Armstrong does. He *tentatively* holds that propositions are the primary TBRs (see [2004: 12] for his discussion of propositions as TBRs).

⁴¹For example, Paul (2013 and forthcoming) is a recent defender of a "One Category Ontology" (forthcoming: 1), on which the *only fundamental ontological category* is that of PAP.

⁴²For example, Westerhoff (2005: see especially §3) argues that SOAs are basic and that an ontology of SOAs, what he calls a "factualist" ontology (ibid.: 66), is preferred over what he calls a "thingist"

where the only entities that exist, let alone the entities that can play the TMK-role, are PAPs, SOAs, or objects, respectively. It is also compatible with a *pluralism concerning the categorial ontology specifically of TMKs*, where there are many entities of a plurality of different categories (e.g. objects, SOAs, events, facts, properties, universals) that are TMKs and play the TMK-role.

Overall, I take it to be a virtue of an account of TT if it can retain BATT's compatibility with TMK-*pluralism*. Nothing in BATT, as I've presented it, requires us to make any decisions about these substantial metaphysical matters. Applying the Modesty Principle (§0.1), any account of TT that tries to *go beyond* BATT while avoiding substantial metaphysical commitments and thus retaining BATT's *metaphysical modesty* should be taken to be virtuous. In §2, I present my favoured way of *going beyond* BATT. In §4 and in Part Two, I explain how my account is metaphysically modest.

1.8 Conclusion of this Chapter

So far, I have: (1) presented elements of BATT, namely TM, T-REL, TD, R-TMK, R-ROT, and R-TBR; and (2) argued that TT is compatible with both the enterprise of giving a ToT and also *prima facie* compatible with ToT-skepticism. Regarding (2), I argued, further, that different philosophies, whether of pragmatist, coherentist, or deflationary inclinations can attempt to build a version of TT. To accomodate these views, BATT should be *tolerant* and *neutral* about the nature of TBRs and TMKs. Whether or not their views will amount to the right version of TT and whether or not their version will add the right further specifications to BATT is a matter of what the right steps are in *going beyond* BATT.

ontology (ibid.). Without mentioning what Armstrong (1997: 113–119) calls the “truthmaker argument” at all, he distinguishes between two types of argument, the “semantic” argument (2005: 72–77) and the “cognitional” argument (ibid.: 66). But, against such an account, see (Dodd 1999: *passim*; and 2000: 8).

Chapter 2

Truthmaking and Aboutness: *My Favoured Account*

2.1 Introduction: *TT, SAC, and going beyond the Basic Account*

In this chapter, I present what I call The Aboutness Account of Truthmaking (TAAT), with *my* specifications for *going beyond* BATT. In §2.2, I introduce the aboutness condition of truthmaking. In §2.3, I discuss the history and current state of TAAT. In §2.4, I distinguish between *what the best semantic account says TBRs are about* (SEM-TAC) and notions irrelevant for truth such as folk-aboutness and metaphorical-aboutness. I then introduce what I call *strict* and *full aboutness* (SAC) as capturing the main, relevant aspects of SEM-TAC and the central concept behind my version of TAAT. In §2.5–2.7, I present some of the basic elements of my version of TAAT, discussing issues to do with *asymmetry*, *intentionality*, and *satisfaction*. In §2.8–2.9, I introduce further theoretical machinery to help clarify the view and to argue that my favoured account can give us a way of avoiding commitment to the NEC, a metaphysically immodest kind of relation, which must be avoided if it can be.

2.2 The Aboutness Condition of Truthmaking

Consider

T1: This table exists.

Being a truth, T1 is a TBR with the property *being true*. What makes this TBR true? As we saw, there are different accounts which could attempt to account for what makes T1 true, each potentially with radically different stories of what exactly T1, T-REL and T1's TMKs are. TAAT is one of these accounts and starts with a simple question: What in the world is T1 *about*?

To answer this question we can start, in this case, by answering that at least one of the things that T1 is about is *a particular table*. Starting with this intuitive thought,

one might be moved to think that a very natural way to proceed, to identify *fully* what the TMKs are for T1, is to identify *fully* what T1 is about. Thus, the first main claim or condition, which TAAT adds to BATT, is what I shall call *the aboutness condition* of truthmaking (AC):

(AC): truths are made true by the parts (or aspects) of reality *which they are about*.

Truths are TBRs that are *true* and *made true* by what they are *about*. TBRs are those entities which can be true and which can be *about* entities and how things are with those entities. And, TMKs are those entities and the ways things are with those entities which truths are about. Only TAAT, via AC and further elements of the account, can specify, in any given instance of T-REL, what makes any hypothetical TMK suitable to play this *truthmaking aboutness role* (TABR). Whatever other commitments one might have about the *nature* of TMKs that are compatible with TABR, but which are not a consequence of TABR, are commitments about the nature of TMKs that one might have *in addition* to the commitments of TAAT. These same points hold for the nature of TBRs, T-REL, and truths.

2.3 Historical and Current TAATs: *Aboutness and T-REL as Dual Relations*

To give the reader a sense of the background to my own version of TAAT before going into its details, I shall now briefly discuss the ideas of some fellow TAAT-ists.

Yablo (2014) expresses our shared puzzlement about the relative neglect of aboutness in the philosophical literature when he writes,

And yet the notion plays no serious role in philosophical semantics. This is surprising—sentences have aboutness properties, if anything does—so let me explain. One leading theory, the truth-conditional theory, gives the meaning of a sentence, *Quisling betrayed Norway*, say, by listing the scenarios in which it is true, or false. Nothing is said about the principle of selection, about *why* the sentence would be true, or false, in those scenarios. Subject matter is the missing link here. *A sentence is true because of how matters stand where its subject matter is concerned*. [2014: 1; my emphasis on the final sentence]

Unlike Yablo, however, my aim is not to present what is called a “truthmaker semantics,”¹ which is supposed to replace truth-conditional semantics, and where the notion of *subject matter* is understood in terms of TMKs and provides the missing link that mere truth-conditions cannot.² The semantic sketch that I give of TT is plausible independent of whether or not a full TMK-semantics can be given. Yablo implies, in the passage

¹See also especially Fine (2015a: §1–2).

²The closest I come is in §8.4 where I distinguish between truth-conditions and TMK-conditions.

above, that *what exactly the best semantic account says that truths are about* is an as yet underdeveloped area of philosophical semantics. This significantly constrains how detailed we can be in our analysis of what truths are about on the basis of SEM-TAC.

However, in what follows I contribute to the development of articulating what the best *semantic account of aboutness* says that truths are about by fleshing out only the main aspects of such an account that I think are necessary to address the most pressing in-house debates in TT. Giving a *full account* of the best semantic account of *aboutness* is unnecessary and would make us stray too far from the main task of this dissertation. My presentation of the TT-relevant aspects of aboutness, however, will constitute a significant contribution both to this important, underdeveloped area of philosophy and to paving the path for articulating the right, modest, aboutness-based account of TT.

Yablo and I are not the only TAAT-ists. Even though there have not been many TT-ists who have been explicit adherents to TAAT and AC, the account has a good pedigree. Lewis for instance writes, “roughly speaking, truths must have *things* as their *subject matter*” (1999a: 206; my emphasis on ‘subject matter’). He also writes, “Any proposition has a subject matter, on which its truth value supervenes” (2003: 25). Barry Smith points out that “A truthmaker for a given judgement must be [that] which the judgement is *about*, must satisfy some relevance constraint” (1999: 279; his emphasis). Both Lewis and Smith clearly take *aboutness* and *subject matter* to be central to truth and truthmaking.

The main motivation for adding *aboutness* and thereby fixing what Smith calls “some relevance constraint” has been to avoid paradoxical consequences such as contingent facts making true necessary truths even though they have *no relevance* to each other.³ AC has been mainly presented as a tool to fix other accounts such as T-ET and T-NEC. NEC-ists, following Merricks (2007: 34), see the relevance constraint as an *addition* to NEC, not as a rival. T-ET-ists see it as a constraint on ET, or a way to replace or update classical ET. In particular, Smith (ibid.), Restall (1996), and Read (2000) are T-ET-ists who explore the strategy of construing T-REL not in terms of ET but in terms of RELEVANT ENTAILMENT (R-ET), which is what one might call a *relevantist revision of classical logic* (Heathcote 2003: 345).⁴ In short, according to this view, for A to entail B, A and B must be *relevant* to each other in some appropriate sense.⁵ Relevantists use this to criticise classical logic, which permits supposedly paradoxical entailments such as *Ex Falso Quodlibet*, which is of the form ‘A and not-A, therefore B’ and is permitted

³See §2.8 for in-depth discussion.

⁴Heathcote (2003) is a skeptic about R-ET however. See also (Rodriguez-Pereyra 2006b: 187) for a less extensive argument against replacing ET with R-ET. See (Rodriguez-Pereyra 2006a: 970ff) for an argument that R-ET is committed to what is called “the Conjunction Thesis” (Read 2000: 71), which he argues is false. Since my account is more general and rejects ET, I will not discuss these criticisms.

⁵Exactly how to cash out ‘relevance’ to give a satisfactory revision of classical logical consequence which incorporates relevance is a matter of dispute. See (Read 1995: 54–60) and (Mares 2004: §1) for introductions to relevant logic and (Jago 2013a) for a recent survey with a focus on how quantifiers work in relevant logic.

even if *A* and *B* are completely irrelevant to one another. Relevantist-T-ET-ists explain that the relevant notion of ET is not classical ET, but must be R-ET.

This follows the TT-strategy first sketched out, but since then almost completely neglected,⁶ by van Fraassen (1969). Van Fraassen attempts to formulate some basic elements of TT and uses it to give a “semantic explication of tautological entailment” (see especially [ibid.: 484–486] for the proofs and the explication). Tautological entailment, in part, gives us a way to understand what makes true necessary or logical truths in such a way that we avoid Anderson and Belnap’s “fallacy of relevance” ([van Fraassen ibid.: 485]; see [Anderson and Belnap 1967: 1–22] for the formal presentation and discussion of the fallacy). The fallacy is, in short, that if *A* is a tautology (or a necessary truth), then *B* strictly implies *A*, but according to Anderson and Belnap (in the words of van Fraassen), “the premise of an inference should be relevant to its conclusion, and the conclusion’s being tautological does not make it so” (ibid.). Van Fraassen puts this explicitly in terms of *making true*, when he writes, “what makes $A \vee \neg A$ true is exactly what makes *A* true if *A* is true, or what makes $\neg A$ true if $\neg A$ is true. But what makes *B* true has, in general, nothing to do with what makes *A* or $\neg A$ true” (ibid.).⁷ According to van Fraassen, the right way of explicating what he calls “tautological entailment” is in terms of *making true* (see [ibid.: 485–486] for his proof). In short, van Fraassen understands T-REL in terms of what he calls Russell’s truism:⁸

Russell’s Truism: “A sentence *A* is true [false] if and only if some fact that makes *A* true [false] is the case.” [ibid.: 479; van Fraassen’s square brackets]

Van Fraassen’s early theory is meant to be not just an application of Russell’s Truism, but also an explanation of the importance of *facts* for explicating these logical notions. However, as I stated (§1.7), we should remain *pluralist* about the nature of TMK. Certain key elements of his discussion are, despite this, important for our purposes.

Van Fraassen discusses C. I. Lewis’s (1943) theory of *states of affairs*, which Lewis puts in terms not of *making true* but of *signification*. Together, SOAs and *signification* are used to build Lewis’s understanding of truth, which van Fraassen captures thus:

Signification-Truth: “A sentence *A* is true if and only if every fact that *A* describes as being the case (or *signifies*) is the case.” [ibid.: 481; the name is mine]

Signification-Truth clearly puts truth in terms of a TBR’s being related to the TMKs by a *relation* called ‘*signification*’.

About this relation, van Fraassen, interestingly, says, “signification is a relation “dual” to *making true*” (ibid.), and, to avoid having a theory which is “trivial” or “arbitrary,”

⁶However, recent discussions include Read (2000: 67) and Heathcote (2003: 11–12).

⁷I shall explicate the analogue of this point about entailment, as the Relevance Objection to T-ET and T-NEC in §2.8. See Read (2000) who discusses and tries to undermine the thesis capturing van Fraassen’s first point in the quotation, which Read calls “the Disjunction Thesis (DT), that whatever makes a disjunction true must make one or other disjunct true” (ibid: 67).

⁸The source of van Fraassen’s presentation of Russell’s TT truism is (Russell 1956: 211–214).

we must accept both Signification-Truth and Russell's Truism.⁹ Also, he approvingly cites (Dunn 1966) saying that "Dunn showed [...] that tautological entailment could be explicated in terms of the topics that sentences are "about," but this relation of *being about* was not further explicated" (ibid.: 485). So, *signification* and *aboutness* are clearly taken to be at least similar notions. My explication of TT in terms of aboutness is motivated by similar general reasons that motivate Dunn's talk of aboutness and van Fraassen's inclusion of signification into what we might construe as an early TAAT.

The story presented in this section illustrates a clear evolution in the literature. Discussion of the notion of relevance stems from work on relevant logic by Anderson and Belnap (especially [1962] and [1975]). It takes up an important role in van Fraassen's (1969) thinking about truth and TT when he uses a fact-or-SOA-based approach to TT to develop a fuller semantics for Anderson and Belnap's notion of entailment and relevance. Recent, important work on TT by Restall (1996) and Jago (2012), among others, picks up where van Fraassen left off.

However, the revival seems to take the explanatory story in one direction: the TMK framework can help us understand relevant logic¹⁰ and it can help us develop a new semantics, now popularly called TMK-semantics.¹¹

My proposal is to take the explanatory story in the other direction: that we can get a grip of the nature of T-REL itself by thinking of how it relates to *aboutness*. My aim is not to give a full, robust TT, in the sense that Restall (1996: 339) talks about, but rather, the aim is to make a case for modest ways that we can *go beyond* BATT while learning from *aboutness* and its affinity to T-REL. And, I think it is important not just to think of the role of *aboutness* in the *relevance* sense in which attempts are made to *capture* T-REL in terms of ET (see §1.2.1 for the distinction between *capturing* T-REL by some *logical principle* such as ET and *understanding* or *accounting for* what T-REL is). My account tries to understand T-REL as the "dual" or as I shall also call it the "complement" to *aboutness* (§2.5–2.6).¹² What sets what I say apart from the historical and current TAATs which I mentioned in this section is that I do not see AC as merely an addition to NEC or ET, but as a notion which should replace them (see §2.7–2.9).

⁹See (van Fraassen ibid.: 481) for the details of why accepting only one or the other is arbitrary. Accepting both leads to a "generous [...], not parsimonious" (ibid.) theory of TT, which I would accept as part of *pluralism*.

¹⁰Restall says, "see[ing] the fine structure of truthmakers [...]" gives us access to a more discriminating account of entailment, which can support our pre-theoretic notions of truthmaking. I recommend it to all those who seem to understand contemporary work on relevant logic, and for those who wish to form a robust theory of truthmaking" (1996: 339).

¹¹See my earlier references to Yablo and Fine for examples. Also, Jago, Fine's collaborator, confirmed in conversation (August 2015) that I am summing things up accurately.

¹²Although Fine and Yablo's approach is *prima facie* compatible with my approach because of duality, they might reject *duality*, if they want to give a more general account of *aboutness* in terms of *truthmaking* which leaves open the idea that *truthmaking* may be more than just the *dual* of *aboutness*. See (Fine 2015b: 1) on the notion of duality which we are familiar with in classical logic.

2.4 Some Basic Commitments of TAAT: *Strict and Full Aboutness & What the Best Semantic Account Says TBRs are About*

In §2.4.1, I distinguish between different types of aboutness, namely *folk-aboutness*,¹³ *apparent-aboutness*, *metaphorical-aboutness*, and *semantic-aboutness*. In §2.4.2, I introduce what I call *strict* and *full aboutness* as capturing some of the main, relevant features of this best semantic account of what TBRs are about.

2.4.1 What the Best Semantic Account Says TBRs are About

First, there are many different types of *aboutness*. For instance, the folk¹⁴ might claim, unthinkingly accepting a subjectivist view of truth, that statements of truth such as “God is good’ is true’ are just statements of opinion and, as a result, are just about those opinions. It is doubtful that this is a good theory of what truths are about.¹⁵ Here’s another example. The folk theory of aboutness, in particular one that is mathematically illiterate,¹⁶ might hold that the TBR ‘The average, middle-income family is economically less well off in 2016 than in 2008’ is about an entity *the average, middle income family*. Such a theory is clearly inadequate. A better theory might hold that what the TBR is about is not one thing but a plurality of things and ways these things are; perhaps it is about all middle-income families and their well-being measurements summed up and divided by the number of middle-income families. What TBRs are about is sometimes not obvious. Clearly, an uninformed folk theory is inadequate for our purposes.

One might say that ‘Ghosts live among us’ is *metaphorically about* human suffering or mourning. Or, as Max Black reports, when one says, “Nixon is an image surrounding a vacuum” (1993: 39), presumably one is not *literally* talking about Nixon and stating that he is an image surrounding a vacuum, and hence not *literally* talking about these things. What one might be *metaphorically* talking about, if there even is a coherent notion of metaphorical aboutness, is anyone’s guess.¹⁷

¹³In his early account of ‘about’, Goodman (1961) points out that the ordinary notions of ‘about’ are “readily shown to be inconsistent” (ibid.: 1). We aboutness-theorists must aim for a more rigorous and consistent notion of aboutness than that which the folk provides.

¹⁴By ‘folk’ I mean to refer to what Kant calls “the great unthinking mass” (1784: 55) or what Strawson calls the “unthinking multitude” (1972: 18’ 37”). Of course, it would be the hope of every good democrat that the multitude would become a *thinking* multitude, and part of the role of the philosopher is to pave the way by clearing up the issues relevant to this thinking, including issues to do with *aboutness*.

¹⁵See (Lynch 2004: 32–35) for a relevant discussion.

¹⁶Gorman (2006: 140) uses this term in a similar example to make a similar point.

¹⁷I cite Black here, partly because he thinks that what he calls “strong metaphors [...] can, and sometimes do, generate insights about “how things are” in reality” (ibid.). But it is clear that the *aboutness* involved in such *strong metaphors* is a metaphorical *aboutness* much less straightforward than the *aboutness* that we are concerned with. He cites Austin (1962: 98–99) as one who rejects the question “Can metaphorical statements be true?” (Black ibid.: 38). According to Austin (ibid.), not every statement aims at truth. For instance, the metaphorical *use* of a statement is a *use* where truth

What should be clear is that the *aboutness* that we are concerned with when we talk about the *aboutness* of truths, is *what the best semantic account says that they are about* (SEM-TAC), assuming of course that there is such an account and that semantics says anything about *aboutness* at all. It is *obviously not* just what the uninformed folk take them to be about, or what they might be metaphorically about.

One last, classic example should suffice to make it clear that SEM-TAC is much less straightforward than folk accounts. Take the TBR ‘Brakeless trains are dangerous.’¹⁸ At first reading, and presumably this would be the *apparent* and *folk* understanding of what this TBR is about, one might think that we are referring to all the brakeless trains there are, and saying of them that they are dangerous.

However, let’s say that there are no actual instantiations of any of these things: there are no brakeless trains. On my analysis so far, and on the standard analysis, these TBRs would not be true (and would be either false on a Russellian analysis or neither true nor false on a Strawsonian understanding). The problem with understanding these TBRs in a folk or unreflective way (and then supplementing it with the standard story of reference failure) is that we get the wrong result. Brakeless trains would be and are indeed dangerous. In fact, it is likely that the reason why there are no brakeless trains is that they *are* dangerous. This TBR is true even though the things it is *apparently about* do not exist. A better semantic analysis would make the TBR out not to be *about* any brakeless trains, which do not exist, but *about* brakeless trains *in general* (or if they were to exist). Perhaps this is a *law* of some sort; a law concerning brakeless trains. Laws hold and statements of laws are true even if nothing is subject to them at some given time. Thus, it is clear that the best semantic analysis of TBRs is not as straightforward as the *folk* or the *unreflective* analyser might take them to be.

To sum up, we are talking about *literal, semantic aboutness*, rather than other notions such as *folk* or *metaphorical aboutness*.

2.4.2 Strict and Full Aboutness as What the Best Semantic Account Says TBRs are About

Now I want to introduce what I call *strict* and *full aboutness*. This notion of aboutness captures the essentials of the best SEM-TAC that is relevant for TT. And it is *the heart* of my preferred *strict-and-full-aboutness-based* account of TT (SAC; I shall use this abbreviation both for the notion of aboutness and for the account based on this notion of aboutness).

and falsity are irrelevant, and hence, may not generate any insights about how things are in reality. Whether Black or Austin is right in what they say about metaphor and truth, whatever link to the world metaphors have, the *metaphorical aboutness* link, if there is one, is a much less straightforward one than the literal *aboutness* of non-metaphorical TBRs.

¹⁸This example is due to Johnson (1924: part III, 12). It is discussed by Armstrong (1983: 21–22). Yablo (2012: 1025) attributes the example to Lewis.

2.4.2.1 Aboutness Apparatuses, Existence-entailing Expressions, and Context-Sensitivity

SAC, as the *best* SEM-TAC, *requires* that aboutness is not just a matter of *reference*, narrowly construed as the relation that relates singular and plural terms to their real-world-correspondents. But it is a matter of the *aboutness* of all the parts of the TBR that one can use to be *about* entities and how things are with those entities. This is an important part of the doctrine of intentionality, which I shall be using to explicate SAC. In my understanding of the doctrine of intentionality, I follow, but also expand on, the construal given by McCulloch (1994: 26–31) and Crane (2013), when he says:

I am using the idea of what is ‘talked about’ and ‘thought about’ in a very general way, to apply to any thing that is what we might call the subject-matter of thought or discourse. Recall that I do not understand such ‘aboutness’ as *reference*. Reference—the relation in which singular terms stand to objects, or plural terms stand to pluralities of objects—is one way in which words can be about things, but it is only one way. Predication, too, is a way in which words can be about things. When I say that some pigs swim what I am saying is about swimming just as much as it is about pigs. ‘All men are mortal’ is about mortality as much as it is about all men. But it is perfectly natural to think of the sentence as being about all men too. [ibid.: 39]

The way that Crane uses ‘aboutness’ here captures an important aspect of SAC.¹⁹ Predicates as well as singular and plural terms are part of what I shall call our toolbox of “aboutness apparatuses.” These apparatuses help to determine the content of TBRs (e.g. sentences, beliefs, judgements), especially those aspects that specify what in the world the TBRs are about, including both which objects (via referring expressions) and how things are with those objects (mainly via predicates). McCulloch (1994: 26–31) sums up this part of the doctrine when he writes, “intentional objects [that is, the objects of aboutness²⁰] have turned out to be properties such as *being pretty* and individuals such as London, sometimes considered as combined in this or that way. The doctrine of intentionality, on this construal, is the claim that mental acts make reference to such properties and individuals” (ibid.: 28).²¹ He goes so far as to say that this doctrine of intentionality “is one of the glories of analytical philosophy” (ibid.: 30).

An important part of my view is that language can represent in *intricate ways* and that the toolbox of language is very rich. The richness of the toolbox, in turn, allows

¹⁹However,, I think our accounts differ in other ways which I have no space to discuss. On the point discussed, Ramsey (1927: 44–45) seems to agree that TBRs can be about multiple things, perhaps also including properties, when he writes, “a proposition about ‘the fact that aRb ’ must be analysed into (1) the proposition aRb , (2) some further proposition about a , R , b , and other things [...] We are driven, therefore, to Mr Russell’s conclusion that a judgment has not one object but many, to which the mental factor is multiply related” (ibid.). Thanks to Sundholm for reminding me of Ramsey’s discussion.

²⁰We shall have much more to say about intentional objects later.

²¹For more on the step from predicates to properties, though the discussion is not put explicitly in terms of intentionality, see Martin (1997: 193–194; and 1980: 9).

us to retain BATT's modest commitment to metaphysical tolerance, neutrality, and categorial pluralism concerning the nature of TBRs and the nature of TMKs (see §1.3 and §1.7, respectively). Ceusters and Smith (2015: 2) and Ceusters' (2012: 70) account of aboutness, for instance, is congruous with mine on this matter. They claim that what they call ICEs (Information Content Entities; entities with content and aboutness)

stand in [the] relation of *aboutness* to some *portion of reality* rather than just to some *entity* [where] the domain of the aboutness relation [...] include[s] *inter alia* universals [...], relations [...], other ICEs [...], and configurations [which highlights that the domain of aboutness includes] not only [...] Barack Obama but also [...] his *role* of being President of the USA and [...] the USA itself. [Ceusters and Smith 2015: 2; their emphases; I've left out some of their explications.]

This notion, that what ICEs are about are “portions of reality,” underlines my point that on a modest account of TT, TBRs should not just be about *entities* but *how things are with entities* and what I called a “variety of *modes of being*” (§1.2.2). Clearly on the most prominent accounts that I have discussed so far, including Crane's, and Smith and Ceusters', aboutness is understood in an inclusive, categorially pluralist way.

I now focus on two more ways that illustrate how varied and rich the toolbox of aboutness apparatuses is on my account of aboutness. Some predicates are not what we might call “existence-entailing”²² and some are. For instance, plausibly, predicates made up of adjectives such as ‘potential’, ‘putative’, ‘hypothetical’, ‘mythological’, and ‘imaginary’ are not existence-entailing; this is why one speaks the truth when one says that the hypothetical object Vulcan does not exist but that the hypothetical and confirmed-to-exist object Neptune does exist. Knowing which expressions are referential and existence-entailing and which ones are not is an important part of *mastering* the vocabulary of a language and is important for non-philosophical contexts as much as for philosophical contexts. If Alfred tells little Erik that the Kraken is a mythological, imaginary creature invented to frighten children when they think of the sea, then Erik would be making a mistake if, trusting that Alfred is telling the truth, he were to think, as a result, that the Kraken exists. Specifically, he misunderstands what Alfred is saying, what he is talking about. He does not understand yet that ‘mythological, imaginary creature’ is not existence-entailing. And knowing this is essential for Erik's understanding of what Alfred is talking *about* here. Unless Erik comes to understand which terms are existence-entailing and which are not, Erik will not understand either what is said or what is being talked *about*. The best SEM-TAC must reflect the various, intricate uses of languages.²³ And, the best account of TT must respect and accommodate this.

²²Priest (2005: 64) and Crane (2013: 61ff) think that many properties are existence-entailing while many others are not. Examples of existence-entailing properties would be: *being material*, *being located in space and time*, etc.

²³Echoing Wittgenstein (1953: especially §§11–17 and 23), language is not just richly varied in terms of the tools there are to do other things than refer, describe, or talk about the world, but it is richly varied in terms of the tools it has to talk about the world.

Further, the best semantic account must also incorporate a sensitivity to how context affects aboutness. For example, surface grammar and the normal use of words might mislead us in cases where understanding the context of use is essential to understanding what is talked about. Consider another example, discussed by Bigelow (1996: 39):

If you say that Othello loves Desdemona, in a sense which does not require the existence of Othello, then what is said is really not something about Othello at all, but about something else, perhaps we are just saying something about Shakespeare's play (whatever that is) or about Shakespeare and what he said. [ibid.]

In this case, we are using names in apparently standard ways to talk in an existence-entailing way about things (here, Othello and Desdemona), but in fact the TBRs are used to talk about completely different things (here, Shakespeare's play). In this case, plausibly, we are using these names in a different context, to talk indirectly about works of fiction rather than about people. Knowing the context in which the TBR is used is sometimes essential for knowing what it is about. The best SEM-TAC must also be sensitive to how context affects aboutness.

2.4.2.2 SAC and Derivative Aboutness

After criticising an inadequate, metaphysically extravagant account of aboutness, I shall properly introduce SAC. Recall

T1: This table exists.

The natural semantic account of the aboutness of T1 is that T1 is about the particular table that I am drawing the reader's attention to. An alternative account of what it is about, let's call it the *fundamentalist* account, FUND-AC, might claim that TBRs such as T1 are about some fundamental constituents of reality. Trope-fundamentalists, for instance, might claim that when they speak about a particular table, they are talking about the tropes out of which things such as tables are bundled. So, rather than speaking about the particular table, they are speaking about tropes. Trope-fundamentalists (or fundamentalists of other kinds as well) generally are not eliminativists about ordinary, medium-sized dry goods such as tables. Rather, they think that such things do exist; they just do not exist fundamentally. Instead, they exist derivatively on what is fundamental, by for instance being related to what is fundamental through different grounding relations or constitution relations.²⁴ They might hold a theory of *aboutness* where T1 is *about* what is fundamental. I shall argue that this is not satisfactory.

²⁴See (Paul 2010 and forthcoming) for a metaphysics where tropes or PAPs are what are fundamental, and objects such as tables are to be understood as bundles of PAPs. Some take bundling to be a primitive relation, called 'compresence' (Campbell 1990: 130–133), understood as co-location in space-time (Schaffer 2001: 250), or 'concurrence' (Bacon 1995: 20). Paul rejects compresence, arguing that such accounts cannot distinguish between objects with the same location such as electrons and other microentities (2010: 1). She (2010; and forthcoming: 35–36) opts for a "Mereological Bundle Theory," where bundles are mereological fusions. Objects are *created* by mereologically fusing PAPs which have spatio-temporal location (also understood in terms of PAPs). I mention such theories merely to display the variety of such relations.

First, FUND-AC brings into an account of aboutness *metaphysical* commitments concerning fundamental metaphysics which are clearly too much to demand of a general *semantic* theory. Any good SEM-TAC is a *general* theory concerning a common linguistic phenomenon that involves all kinds of truth-relevant language, and not just fundamental language. The fact that there is no non-controversial account of fundamentality should make a semanticist and even a fundamentalist skeptical of trying to give an account of what ordinary TBRs such as T1 are about. Of course the question ‘What is fundamental?’ may be a serious and important question, even though it is one that philosophers are still trying to answer. We might, in the end, find the answer to the question ‘What are tables *fundamentally*?’. But, the question ‘What are TBRs about?’ can be answered independently of the other question. That the right *semantic* account of aboutness is beholden to the right *metaphysical* theory of fundamentality seems implausible. My claim is that the aboutness question can be answered without appeal to fundamentalia or to any other level of reality than the *relevant* level, in this case the level of tables.

Second, if what we are talking about, when we use TBRs such as T1, are fundamental-PAPs-bundled-table-wise and not tables, then our languages lose the resources to make claims about how tables and tropes are related in terms of the fundamental relations (e.g. mereological bundling). We need to be able to talk about ordinary-medium-sized dry goods to be able to talk about how they are related to trope-bundles. And to claim that all TBRs are *about* what is fundamental is to claim that we are unable to talk about what is not fundamental, and also about how what is not fundamental is related to what is fundamental. I shall argue for this further in §5 (especially §5.4.2), where I argue against the Fundamentalist version of TT. But it should be clear that the right *semantic* account of what truths and TBRs are about cannot claim that what we talk about is only what is fundamental, and that we are never talking about tables (assuming that tables are not fundamental entities).

Thus, to avoid such theories of aboutness, we need a more restricted notion of *aboutness*, which captures slightly better what we might mean when we say that truths are about what the best semantic account says they are about.

To do this, I want to make a distinction between what the TBR in question is *strictly and fully about*, and what the TBR is *derivatively about*, given the truth of further TBRs about the world not mentioned in the TBR in question. For example, T1 is *strictly* about a particular table, while it might *derivatively* be about the tropes which it consists in fundamentally, assuming trope-fundamentalism about tables. However, there is nothing in T1 that tells us anything about what the table consists in fundamentally or non-fundamentally,²⁵ nor does it tell us anything about any tropes. These are instances of what Quine calls *collateral information*,²⁶ that is, information that is perhaps important

²⁵Let us say that *some* philosophers are right and the particles that the table consists of are not fundamental. Whatever we say about a table does not necessarily tell us anything either about what it fundamentally consists of nor about the various non-fundamental particles or parts that it consists of.

²⁶See (Quine 1960: §2, especially pp. 137f).

as background information which helps us to understand the TBR in question, but that is not the information conveyed in the TBR itself.²⁷ The information about tropes and about fundamentality only comes with further information not contained in the TBR in question.

To generalise, we might say, then, that what a TBR is *strictly* and *fully* about is captured by the information that the TBR conveys irrespective of its collateral information. And to avoid such *metaphysically loaded* and hence *semantically implausible* accounts of what truths in general are *about*, we might re-formulate the *aboutness* condition (AC) relevant for TT as one that the fundamentalist clearly rejects, what I shall call *the strict and full aboutness condition* of truthmaking (SAC):²⁸

(SAC): truths are made true by the parts of reality which they are *strictly* and *fully about*.²⁹

SAC is the version AC of TAAT which, I think, minimally captures what we need for a plausible and useful account of TT. I shall now briefly make clear what strictness and fullness amount to.

2.4.2.3 Strictness

Strictness restricts what the TBR is about to just those entities and how things are with those entities that are specified by the various aboutness apparatuses, which in turn help make the TBR about them. It excludes any further entities to which they might be related, and excludes any other properties or relations that the entities described might instantiate other than the ones mentioned. For example, the TBR ‘the table is black’ is strictly about the table and that it is black, and not strictly about any of the table’s constituent parts or its shape. As I made clear in the previous sections, specifying exactly what the TBRs are strictly about is not always straightforward. But, I think that it is safe to say that *what the best SEM-TAC says any given TBR is strictly about* corresponds to *important features of the context* in which the TBR is used to be strictly about certain parts of the world, rather than others. For instance, a competent user of aboutness apparatuses in English may use an English-language TBR such as ‘the bank is empty’ to be strictly about the lack of people in the bank in whose lobby he is standing, while another competent user might use the same TBR to be about the lack of gold bars in the safe of the bank which he is robbing. Neither the normal client who is visiting the bank during his lunch break, nor the unlucky bank robber, are talking about fundamental

²⁷The TBRs Quine discusses are sentences, but what he says about sentences, I think, transfers over to all TBRs. See §1.3 for my stance on TBRs.

²⁸Adding to §2.4.2, ‘SAC’ will be used to refer to the *condition* as well as to the *notion* and *account*.

²⁹One might add ‘minimally’ or ‘at least’ after ‘made true’, because one should not completely rule out the fact that truths can be made true (non-minimally) by the portions of reality of which the minimal TMKs, which the truths are strictly about, are part. But any non-minimal TMKs are only TMKs derivatively or indirectly because they have the minimal TMKs as parts.

particles of any sort. Also, in some cases and in some contexts, the surface structure of the TBR might also not transparently reveal what the TBR is strictly about. For instance, when Jack tells Sally that he has left his children in the lurch by opting to go to the pub instead of helping them with their homework, he is not talking about a place *the lurch*, in which he has left them. As a competent speaker of English, Sally would be able to understand what Jack is strictly talking about, even though they both would most likely need to use collateral information to give a speaker of English unfamiliar with that phrase an understanding of what Jack is strictly talking about.³⁰

My *strictness* constraint is similar to Yablo's *proportionality requirement* on aboutness (2014: 75–76). In explaining this requirement, he writes:

[TMKs] should on the one hand not incorporate irrelevant extras, in whose absence we'd still have a guarantee of truth. What makes it true that there are dogs? Proportionality favors the fact that Sparky is a dog over the fact that Sparky is a black-and-white cockapoo; the extra detail is unneeded. (ibid.: 75)

My strictness requirement yields the result, and captures the intuition, that not just is it *unneeded*, but it is *not strictly relevant* that Sparky is a black-and-white cockapoo. What is relevant is that there are dogs. And Sparky is a TMK only in virtue of his being one of the dogs that exist. See also (ibid.: 13–14) for a discussion of other examples relevant to this. In particular, his example called *Confirmation* (ibid.: 13) makes clear that my understanding of *strict aboutness* as a requirement on the relation between truth and TMKs has a parallel in Confirmation Theory. Gemes (1990; 1998), Grimes (1990), Hempel (1960), and Moretti (2006), who Yablo cites, discuss the problem called “tacking by disjunction” (Yablo 2014: 13). Take the TBR ‘all ravens are black’. The TBR is confirmed by its true consequences. But, some true consequences better confirm it than others. For example, ‘this raven is black’ better confirms the TBR than ‘this raven is black or the sky is pink or Sally loves sauerkraut’. Similarly, the TBR is not *strictly about* any of the things tacked on as a disjunct (in the latter), while it is strictly about this raven, as well as all other ravens. Though, as we’ll see in my next point, it is not *fully* about this raven; it is *fully* about *all ravens*.

2.4.2.4 Fullness (and Partiality)

Fullness indicates that what the TBR is about is *everything*, including all the entities and how things are with those entities, that the aboutness apparatuses make the TBR about, and not *just* any single thing mentioned or described. For example, the TBR ‘the table is black’ is fully about both the table and that it is black and not just the table or blackness-in-general or even its blackness. It may be *partially about* these latter things,

³⁰In Appendix §A4.2, I discuss the lurch example in more depth.

but not *fully* (or *wholly*) *about* them. The TBR ‘all ravens are black’ is *strictly about* each and every raven but it is also *fully about* all of them, and their being black.

As with strict aboutness, sometimes it is not straightforward to give an account of what exactly a TBR is *fully about*. For instance, how partial and strict aboutness and further non-aboutness apparatuses, perhaps such as truth-functional connectives, affect *full* aboutness, can be complicated. A fully developed theory of these matters cannot be given in this dissertation. However, with regard to partial aboutness, I am inclined to claim that TBRs are partially about the various things (and how things are with those things) that the various aboutness apparatuses, that make up the TBR, refer to.³¹ For instance, *that the table is black* refers to a specific table. So, it is partially about that table. Yablo (2014: 14) talks in terms of TBRs being *wholly true*, which I think is related to my notion of *fully about*. Take the conjunction ‘the table is black and the table is round’. This truth is made true in part by the table’s being black, and in part by the table’s being round. As Yablo puts it “True parts confer partial truth on their wholes” (ibid.). As should be clear, the true parts confer partial truth on their wholes, because the whole TBR is *in part about* what the parts are about. But, for the whole to be true, all the TBR-parts, that it is a conjunction of, need to be true. And, for the TBR to be *wholly true*, all the various things it is *wholly or fully about*, via the aboutness apparatuses and TBR-parts out of which it is composed, need to make it true.

In the case of disjunctions, I think the right account formulated in these terms should say that the disjunction is *fully about* each of its disjuncts. Thus, the TMKs for any of the disjuncts will make true the whole TBR, which is constructed out of the disjuncts and the disjunction connective. Although such TBRs are strictly about many more things than each of the things it is *fully about*, the TBR can be made true by any of the disjuncts, each of which it is fully about. Fine (2015b) discusses the TMKs of disjunctions in a similar way, when he discusses what he calls “the notion of being partly about” (ibid.: 3; see also 1).

2.4.2.5 SAC is Not Unique Aboutness

I shall now make explicit that *strictness* and *fullness* together help us see that TBRs are not often about *unique* TMKs.³² Take the normal existential TBR:

T2: There are giraffes.

This TBR is about giraffes. There are many giraffes. So the TBR is clearly not about a unique thing. Rather, it seems to be about a plurality of things. Although the notion of

³¹Merely because doing otherwise can make the sentence constructions rather awkward, I sometimes speak loosely, saying that one can *refer* to properties, as well as to objects. (See §2.4.2.1 for why this would be loose-talk.) Also, I talk about the aboutness apparatuses referring. Perhaps this is shorthand for them being *used to refer* rather than themselves referring. I am agnostic about these issues.

³²I address Schaffer’s worry about TAAT’s apparent commitment to “*unique aboutness*” (2008a: 306).

aboutness might be hard to apply here, more plausibly, it is strictly and fully about each giraffe.

This is also consistent with what most TT-ists think. All TT-ists, even modest ones, can be in agreement with Armstrong (2004: 16–17) when he says that what marks TT as an improvement over the correspondence theory is that it allows that there can be multiple TMKs for truths: the relation is many-many, not one-one.³³ They should also agree with Bigelow, who says, “The Truthmaker axiom should not be construed as requiring a unique truthmaker for each truth” (1988: 130). And clearly, the same holds for any view concerning the *aboutness* of TBRs; particular TBRs can be about many different entities (and how things are with them). The TMKs, as he says, “may be several things, perhaps even an infinite plurality, or it may be just a single thing” (ibid.: 136). Further, on the basis of non-uniqueness, Bigelow recommends we phrase the axiom thus, “Whenever something is true, there must be some thing or *things* whose existence entails that truth [...] to allow for non-unique and plural truthmakers” (ibid.: 130). Ignoring the talk about *existence* entailing truth,³⁴ we may make a parallel rephrasing and take truths to be sometimes *about* one thing and sometimes about many things, and sometimes about many different ways these things are and sometimes about unique ways these things are, which in turn each or together can make true the truths that are about them.³⁵ In sum, it is unclear that a one-to-one restriction on TBRs and TMKs is at all plausible, and it seems clear that other TT-ists would agree with me.

2.4.2.6 Not All TBRs are About the-World-as-a-Whole

To illuminate some further features of SAC, I shall now respond to what Schaffer writes in the following passage,

In general, it seems to me that all truths are about the world, *inter alia*. In this vein, recall Bosanquet’s theory of judgement: “The ultimate subject of the perceptive judgement is the real world as a whole” [Bosanquet 1911: 78]. Consider a given subject-predicate judgement of the surface form ‘*s* is *P*’. On Bosanquet’s theory the deep form of this judgement is ‘Reality is such that *s* is *P*’. I disagree with Bosanquet’s radical claim that Reality is the only possible thing a judgement can be about, but I would accept the more reasonable claim that Reality is always at least one of the things a given judgement is about. [2008a: 306]

³³He writes: “What has been the bane of the correspondence theory, at least in recent philosophy, is the idea that the correspondence between true propositions and the reality in virtue of which they are true is a one-one correspondence. [...] But there is a middle way [...] We can accept a correspondence theory, but in a form where it is recognized that the relation between true propositions and their correspondents is regularly many-many. Indeed even if we restrict ourselves to *minimal* truthmakers, I do not think that we ever get a one-one case.” [ibid.]

³⁴It will become clear in §4 why I say this.

³⁵For example, recalling §2.4.2.4, the different TMKs which a disjunction is fully about *each* make true the disjunction, while the different TMKs a conjunction is fully about can only *together* make true the conjunction.

I agree that in some sense the judgement ‘*s is P*’ is about so-called “Reality” and the world, but unless it says anything about the-world-as-a-whole explicitly or if it is part of the meaning of the sentence, it’s clearly not *about* the-world-as-a-whole, as Schaffer approvingly cites of Bosanquet. Their understanding of “the ultimate subject” and the “deep form” is not plausible. It is true that T2 (‘there are giraffes’) is about the world in *some sense*, and in particular in an *indirect* or *derivative* sense, but this sense is clearly unimportant and reveals why we need to focus on SAC.

Giraffes are clearly part of the-world-as-a-whole. But they are also part of all-habitats-that-giraffes-are-part-of and they are part of the-earth-as-a-whole. But this does not mean that when I say “There are giraffes”, I am also talking about all habitats that giraffes are part of or about the-earth-as-a-whole or about our solar system, or whatever else giraffes are part of. If one thinks that mereology is unrestricted, then one also thinks that giraffes are part of the mereologically composite entity constituted by all the giraffes in the world, my left earlobe, Tony Blair’s chin, and all the penguins in Africa. Clearly, we are talking about “Reality” when we talk about giraffes. But we are clearly talking only about the parts of reality that are the giraffe-parts-of-the-world, that is, the giraffes. And there is a clear sense that all of these other things are merely things that we are talking at best indirectly about when we are talking about giraffes. Even what we are talking indirectly about varies considerably from context to context, and we cannot just be talking about all of the things that giraffes are parts of when we talk about giraffes.

When we use T2, what we are most clearly talking about is best specified by what SAC says we are talking about, that is, those things that we are *minimally*, but *strictly* and *fully*, talking about. Specifically, we are talking about giraffes, whatever they may be and whatever they may be part of. The facts about where giraffes live, and even such facts as the fact that they are part of the-world-as-a-whole, are further facts concerning and involving giraffes, but which require different TBRs to talk directly, that is, strictly and fully, about. Of course, there is a great variety of senses of *aboutness*. In *some* sense T2 is about the-world-as-a-whole being such that there are giraffes. But this is loose talk about *aboutness*. And this is exactly what is ruled out, when I talk about “strict and full” aboutness. SAC is a perfectly intelligible, intuitive, and semantically rigorous sense of aboutness. Thus, Schaffer and Bosanquet’s intuition that judgements about trees are “deeply” or “ultimately” about the-world-as-a-whole, does not challenge SAC as the understanding of aboutness that is appropriate for TT.

2.4.2.7 More on the the Aboutness Apparatuses of SAC: *On the Aboutness of Sentential Vehicles*

Responding to Schaffer’s “second main worry” (2008a: 306) for TAATs will help us distinguish SAC from notions of aboutness that are not relevant for TT. The worry concerns his puzzlement about how *propositions* rather than *sentences* are about anything. He

writes, “Different sentential vehicles place different subjects in the driver’s seat. With sentences one need only look to the denotation of the subject term. *Truthmaking is beside the point*” (2010a: 316). Explaining the problem in more detail, he writes,

[P]rima facie one might expect aboutness judgements to concern sentences, since these have such things as topics and grammatical subjects. Propositions—especially if conceived of as mere sets of worlds—seem the wrong sorts of things to bear aboutness. Here is an argument that aboutness intuitions target sentences rather than propositions. First consider the sentence ‘It is John who kissed Mary’. This seems to be about John. But now consider ‘It is Mary who was kissed by John’. This seems to be about Mary. Or at the very least, the first example seems primarily about John, and the second mainly about Mary. There is some difference in aboutness. But quite plausibly both sentences express exactly the same proposition. Hence aboutness cannot purely be a matter of the proposition, or there could be no aboutness difference between the two examples. Rather I would suggest that aboutness intuitions are tied to sentential vehicles. [Schaffer 2008a: 306–307]

He adds: “Of course [the TT-ist] might reply that the sentential vehicle differences only concern aboutness in the topic sense, not the entity sense. Again, it would be nice to know how to tell” (ibid.). To explain the distinction between the topic and the entity sense of aboutness, he writes:

Merricks [who presents the version of TAAT that he addresses] offers no further account of aboutness, but draws a distinction [2007: 32–33] between (i) a sense of aboutness—call it *the topic sense*—on which <there are no hobbits> is about *hobbits*, and (ii) a sense of aboutness—call it *the entity sense*—on which <there are no hobbits> is not about hobbits since there are none. The entity sense is the relevant sense for truthmaking [according to the TT-ist], since it concerns what there is. [ibid.]³⁶

My response is that the aboutness involved in truthmaking is *clearly* not aboutness in the topic sense—if indeed according to the topic sense ‘It is John who kissed Mary’ is about John and *not* Mary.

First, I want to make some general points which will help us pinpoint which of the various senses of aboutness is the most relevant for truth. As discussed in §2.4.2.1, our toolbox of aboutness apparatuses is rich and varied. For example, TBRs use both referential expressions and predicate expressions to fix what the TBR is strictly and fully about.³⁷ The topic sense of aboutness as understood by linguists who talk about *sentential topic*, which is the sense that Schaffer and Merricks are talking about, is far more restricted and does not utilise the rich variety of tools available. Rather, it is common to

³⁶Schaffer raises similar worries about the aboutness of propositions vs sentences in relation to TT in (2010a: 315–7), but his focus there is in defending his view that the whole cosmos is the only TMK, which is not what I want to focus on.

³⁷Recall Crane (2013: 39). Hawthorne and Manley (2012: 3) discuss the aboutness involved in “a genuinely referential expression of natural language” (ibid.). Our sense of aboutness is broader than, but also contains, this genuinely referential sense of aboutness.

understand sentential topic, as Brown and Yule write, as “a *constituent* in the structure of sentences (or the deep structure analysis, at least)” (1983: 70; my emphasis). What they say reflects the now standard distinction made by Hockett (1958: 201) between *topic* and *comment*, where topics coincide with grammatical subjects and comments with predicates.³⁸ Restricting aboutness to the *topic* sense in this way is clearly unsatisfactory, for TBRs can be used to talk about much more than just a TBR’s grammatical subject. However, as pointed out by Lyons (1968: 335) among others,³⁹ this understanding of the distinction between topic and comment ties it too closely to syntactic notions.⁴⁰ Instead, the topic is the “subject of discourse [which] is described as that element which is *given* in the general situation or in some explicit question to which the speaker is replying; and the comment [is described] as that part of the utterance which adds something *new* (and thus communicates information to the hearer)” (Lyons 1968: 335). In fact, Halliday (1967: 200 and 205), from whom Lyons gets this explication, wants to do away with the topic/comment distinction altogether and *replace* it with the given/new distinction. However, even with this improved understanding of *topic*, it is clear that the truth-relevant understanding of *aboutness* must be broader than the topic sense of aboutness, since what is relevant to truth is not just what the subject of discourse is, but whether what is said of the subject of discourse is how things are with the subject of discourse. Thus, what Hockett (*ibid.*) calls ‘comment’, what Halliday (*ibid.*) and Lyons (*ibid.*) call ‘new’, are also included in the semantically rigorous and truth-relevant sense of aboutness that we are concerned with. *Both* the elements in the topic/comment and the given/new distinctions are part of SAC. Further, SAC is preferable to what Merricks calls the *entity sense* of aboutness. For it is broader and incorporates the fact that it is relevant to the truth of any TBR that we often not only talk about *entities*, but also, *how things are with entities*. So, SAC is not the same as either the *topic* or the *entity sense* of aboutness. And, out of these three, it is clearly also the more truth-relevant sense of aboutness.

Second, what Schaffer suggests when he says that aboutness intuitions are tied to sentential vehicles is related to what I have said so far. Sentences are commonly construed as the basic linguistic “vehicles” we use to express thoughts and propositions and hence to carry meaning. The sentences

T3: It is John who kissed Mary.

³⁸See for instance Dahl (1969) and Benečová et al. (1973), where topic is treated in this way throughout. As Lyons (1978: 335) describes it, Hockett’s is the “now widely accepted terminology” (*ibid.*) that captures a distinction that Sapir famously makes between “something to talk about and something [...] said about this subject of discourse” (1921: 126).

³⁹Halliday (1967: 205) for instance uses this reason to avoid talk of topic and comment altogether.

⁴⁰To be fair to Hockett, in his original discussion, which is the source of the use of the terms, he says, “*In English and the familiar languages of Europe*, topics are *usually also* subjects and comments are predicates” (1958: 201; my emphases). So, according to him, the tie to the syntactic notions of subject and predicate is not *that* close. For this tie is neither claimed to be universal (since he only mentions its presence in European languages) nor constant (since it is only *usual*).

T4: It is Mary who was kissed by John.

express the same proposition and have the same meaning. But, Schaffer (2008a: 306–307) claims that they are about different things, the first one is primarily about John and the second is primarily about Mary. It is a familiar fact that we are able to use different phrases and ways of saying things to say exactly the same thing. T3 is in the active voice and T4 is in the passive voice. Here there are also differences in word-order. These may help us to focus our attention on different things and in this way change what it is we are talking about, to shift and set the main topic of our discussion (in the first case the topic might be John and in the second, Mary).

But, as Schaffer should admit, many of these devices to vary what is called the “focus” of the sentence do not carry implications for meaning and for the propositions involved. They are instances of aboutness in this, non-relevant “topical” sense. Just because I change the word-order and put a sentence in the passive or in the active or if I make certain words **bold** or in *italics*, or any of the other many wonderful devices we can use to change and vary the emphases of sentences, this does not mean that there are consequences for meaning or aboutness in the relevant TT-sense.

Of course, these tools to create what are called “focus effects” can radically vary content in a sense *relevant* for other purposes. For instance, take the question ‘Why did the dog bury the bone?’. With different focus effects, the content of this question can radically vary even though the same words are used. ‘Why did the dog **bury** (rather than, say, **chew**) the bone?’ has a different content from ‘Why did the dog bury **the bone** (rather than **the toy**)?’. If we remove the parentheses, we are left with the same words, but with different questions that have radically different contents.⁴¹

I think that this kind of *focus* has radical consequences for the appropriateness or relevance of certain *explanations* but not for the relevance of TMKs. If one answers the question when the questioner puts a focus effect on ‘bury’ by saying, ‘The dog **buried** the bone because the dog is frustrated that she cannot chew it, having lost all of her teeth in an operation last month’, then one will be giving an appropriate and relevant answer to the question. If instead the answer that is given is, ‘The dog buried the bone because she chewed up all of her toys into tiny pieces’, then one will have given an inappropriate answer to the version of the question that emphasises ‘bury’, but one

⁴¹See (Felka 2014: 263ff) and (Hofweber 2005: 210ff) for extensive philosophical discussion on contemporary linguistic thought regarding how focus effects are used for purposes of *emphasis* and *stress* in linguistic constructions. Hofweber, interestingly for our purposes, points out how syntactic structures can be used for focus effects and can be misinterpreted as having consequences for what kind of things we are talking about. He (ibid.: 211) discusses how words such as ‘four’ in constructions such as ‘the number of moons of Jupiter is four’ can be misread as singular terms, when in fact ‘four’ is a “determiner and placing it in an unusual position [...] has a focus effect as a result” (ibid.). Focus effects are not changes of aboutness, but can be misread to have consequences for aboutness. This is yet another illustration of why getting a grip of the *right SEM-TAC* (which includes knowing how it contrasts with other linguistic phenomena such as focus effects) is so important. I thank Felka (August 2015) for conversations on the relation between FOCUS in her sense and TT. I also thank an anonymous referee from *MIND* for clarifying this even more.

will be giving an appropriate answer to the question that emphasises ‘the bone’. The change in meaning is a change in a different type of relevance than what SAC requires. By contrast, the TMKs for ‘the dog buried the bone’ wherever we put the focus, will be the same; the TMK is *the dog’s having buried the bone*. Putting a focus effect on any of the terms in the TBR produces shifts in focus, content, and relevance. However, as should be clear, these shifts will not be shifts in the relevant sort of *aboutness* that concerns us.

Consider another example: an extended conversation. We might stop the conversation and ask, ‘What is this conversation about?’. The answer might be the EU referendum debate. This might be what the conversation is about overall, that is, the topic of the conversation. But this would be a different notion of *about* than the notion we are asking about when we ask what any individual TBR in the conversation is about. Not all TBRs in a conversation are *about* the general topic of conversation, in the SAC sense of ‘about’ which we might also call the *direct notion*. As there are many different notions of *aboutness*, we must be careful to use the right one.

What we are concerned with *for truth* is not the *aboutness* relevant to what we are focusing on when we are, say, uttering the same TBRs in different ways or putting a focus effect on different terms. Rather, we are concerned with how what is said fixes how we are describing the world to be. We describe the world (and its parts) to be some ways and not others. And these descriptions commit us to the world (or whatever parts of the world we are talking about) being the way it is described. The relevant *aboutness* is fixed using *aboutness apparatuses* which include our tools of reference and predication. And, this *aboutness* is clearly a property of *both* propositions and sentences, and of any other TBR. It is this sense of aboutness that is relevant to TT and is part of SAC. So, Schaffer’s worry that only sentences have aboutness and not propositions rests on a misunderstanding of the sense of aboutness that is relevant for truth.

2.5 Some of the Basic Commitments of TAAT: *Non-Identity, Asymmetry*

Now that I have clarified SAC as the sense of *aboutness* that is relevant for TAAT, I shall present some of the more general commitments of TAAT. Also, henceforth, when I speak about a TBR *being about* anything, I normally use the SAC sense.

What are the commitments of TAAT and the consequences of SAC for TAAT? This depends on what the *aboutness relation* (A-REL)⁴² is and how it relates to T-REL.

⁴²I shall assume that *being about* is a plural *relation*. However, Lewis (1988: 161–164) distinguishes between a *cellular* and the *relational* model of subject matter, which is obviously closely tied to and helps illuminate *aboutness*. Yablo (2014) tries to preserve Lewis’s account, but seems to prefer the relational account when he writes, “A subject matter [...] is a system of differences, a pattern of cross-world variations” (ibid.: 21). He also defines subject matter as a “dissimilarity *relation*” (ibid.: 41; my emphasis). See (Fine 2015c: 18–21) for further discussion. Especially since I hold a *relations-come-easy*

It is important to point out first that T-REL is not A-REL; they are not the same relation. We might state this thus:

The Non-Identity of T-REL and A-REL: T-REL is not identical to A-REL.

Instead T-REL and A-REL are *converse* relations. In particular, they are complementing asymmetric relations that go in different directions. TBRs are *about* TMKs while TMKs are not *about* TBRs (except when the TMKs in question are TBRs and are about other TBRs; example below). There is an *asymmetry* between TBRs and TMKs in terms of the A-REL. But this *asymmetry* goes from TBR to TMKs. One might describe it thus; the arrow represents *directionality*:

The Asymmetry of A-REL: $(\text{TBR} \rightarrow_{\text{A-REL}} \text{TMK}) \ \& \ \text{not}-(\text{TMK} \rightarrow_{\text{A-REL}} \text{TBR})$

As we know, the asymmetry of T-REL goes in the opposition direction:

The Asymmetry of T-REL: $(\text{TMK} \rightarrow_{\text{T-REL}} \text{TBR}) \ \& \ \text{not}-(\text{TBR} \rightarrow_{\text{T-REL}} \text{TMK})$

Generally, TMKs make true TBRs but TBRs do not make true TMKs. Of course some TMKs are TBRs. For instance take the following TBR:

T5: There is at least one TBR.

If T5 exists, then it also makes itself true. And since there are plenty of other TBRs, they also make T5 true. (In this case, there is an overdetermination of truthmaking.) So, some TBRs can make true TBRs. But generally this is not the case. No TBR can make true T1 (recall, T1 is the TBR 'This table exists.'). Only something involving tables can make true T1. Some TMKs are truth-apt, but there are many TMKs, such as tables, which are not TBRs and are not truth-apt. TMKs are not generally *about* anything.⁴³ But all TBRs are about something. A-REL is generally asymmetric in the same way that T-REL is generally asymmetric: they are *normally* asymmetric.⁴⁴ As with T-REL, there are exceptional cases where A-REL is symmetric. Consider T6 and T7:

view of relations (§1.2.2), it should be clear that *being about* is best described as a relation.

⁴³In addition to linguistic TBRs, we might include some non-linguistic or prelinguistic behaviour as TBRs and as having *aboutness*. See (Martin 2008: 93–110) who draws many parallels between linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour in such a way as to make a case for protolinguistic or prelinguistic semantics. He also argues (ibid.: 111–128) that directedness and selectivity, which are marks of intentionality, are "found in the dispositional of any natural property [...] found along with [representational] *use* in any dispositional *system* whatever: psychological or nonpsychological" (ibid.: 111). Further, one might understand Martin's theory of reciprocal disposition partners (2008: 3) as a way of rejecting A-REL's asymmetry. However, a couple of examples will illustrate why intentionality and *aboutness* are generally *asymmetric*, even if we accept Martin's nonlinguistic and nonpsychological intentionality or Dretske's "naturalize intentionality" (1994: 471). Even if a map is *about* a terrain, a terrain is never *about* a map. Even if a tree's rings are, in some sense, *about* its age, its age is not *about* the rings. There are candidates for non-linguistic, non-psychological things with intentionality; but they clearly exhibit the relevant kind of asymmetry. So, to generalise: even if some non-linguistic, non-psychological X is about Y, Y is rarely, if ever, about X. This retains our general asymmetry.

⁴⁴What these examples illustrate is that both relations are strictly speaking non-symmetric, though generally or normally asymmetric since cases such as T5 are special cases. So, I'll keep saying that they are generally *asymmetric*.

T6: This TBR is about T7.

T7: This TBR is about T6.

Here, T6 and T7 seem to be in part *about* each other. Thus, when T6 and T7 are both true, then we have a case where something, T6, is related to something else, T7, with the arrow going in the direction from T6 to T7, while T7 is related to the first thing T6 in the other direction with an arrow going from T7 to T6. But, these are anomalies. We can set aside these anomalous cases for both A-REL and T-REL because the asymmetry holds generally, for all other cases. Thus, it is plausible that the Asymmetry of A-REL and the Asymmetry of T-REL are true.

2.6 Some Basic Commitments of TAAT: *The Problem of Intentionality and the Explanation of Falsity and Truth as the Failure and Satisfaction of Aboutness (Respectively)*

A-REL and T-REL also complement each other in a deeper way. According to TAAT, when some TBR is *about* some particular TMKs, then that TBR is made true when those TMKs have being. Of course, on the standard understanding of A-REL, a TBR can be about some TMK, even if the TMK does not exist (or have being). A-REL does not seem to require the existence of the entity which it is about. A TBR, or some term which helps constitute a TBR, can be *about* things which do not exist. According to Crane (2001: 23), this is “undeniable” (ibid.) and a “manifest fact” (ibid.). Consider:

T8: Pegasus exists.

T8 is about Pegasus. So there seems to be an A-REL between T8 and Pegasus. But Pegasus does not exist. For T8 to be true, according to TAAT, the TMK, namely Pegasus, would have to exist. But since Pegasus does not exist, there is no TMK for T8. So, T8 is false. There seems to be a disanalogy here between A-REL and T-REL. However, a complication arises from this supposed disanalogy. Specifically, it is also an undeniable fact about relations that no relation can exist without its relata existing.⁴⁵ By analogy, if Jon is shorter than Wendy, then the relation *shorter than* exists or holds

⁴⁵See Crane (2001: 23–28), who thinks this is also undeniable. To illustrate, he discusses statements such as ‘there are lots of things which do not exist: for example Pegasus’ (ibid.: 24). One of the ways to hold such a view about, say, Pegasus is to make a distinction between what’s real and what exists. Pegasus, in this case, is real, but does not exist. Relations relate real things, but not necessarily things that exist. As will be clear, even though I distinguish between what’s real (has being) and what exists (§1.2.2), I don’t use ‘real’ in this way. I agree, rather, with Russell when he says: “Logic, I should maintain, must no more admit a unicorn than zoology can; for logic is concerned with the real world just as truly as zoology, though with its more abstract and general features” (Russell 1993: 47).

between Jon and Wendy. And for this to be the case, Jon and Wendy need to exist. Thus, T8 cannot be about Pegasus if the thing that it is about does not exist. But, Pegasus does not exist! What gives?

Broadly, this is what Crane (2001: 22ff) calls “the problem of intentionality” (P-INT). The problem is that there is a conflict between these three claims:⁴⁶

C1: All TBRs are related to the things they are about.

C2: Relations entail the existence of their relata.

C3: Some TBRs are about things which do not exist.

The question is: How can C3 be true, given C1 and C2? C3 is clearly true given TBRs such as T8. Since C2 and C3 are plausibly undeniable truths, the way to resolve P-NEG is to reject C1.

To do this, I now introduce the notion of an *intentional object*.⁴⁷ These are just the *schematic* objects of attention; the things thought about. Such things are not restricted to objects in the *ordinary sense* (ibid.: 16);⁴⁸ they are objects in the *broader sense* that they can be objects, particulars, properties, events, states, processes, etc. So, unlike the ordinary, *substantial* sense of ‘object’, according to Crane (ibid.: 15), the *schematic, intentional* objects of attention clearly do not need to have anything in common with each other, except that they are objects of thought. (Recall §1.7, TAAT’s compatibility with *TMK-pluralism* would be a virtue of the account.)

Importantly, they are not what Searle calls “shadowy intermediaries” (1983: 17). They are just the entities that the TBRs are about. They are not further “representation in our heads” or “ideas in our minds” (Crane ibid.: 16) which we need to be thinking about when we are thinking about other entities such as tables. There is no reason to think that one is thinking about some idea to be thinking about a table ([ibid.], though the existence of such ideas *might* be part of the story about how intentional states such as TBRs can be *about* tables and other things [ibid.: 28–33]). Sometimes our TBRs are about ideas and representations, sometimes they are about tables. Thus, the intentional objects are just those objects that the TBRs are about.

⁴⁶This is adapted from (Crane 2001: 23), though he focuses on thoughts rather than TBRs-in-general. He considers “thoughts [as] relations between thinkers and the things they are about” (ibid.). P-INT concerns all intentional states, such as singular thoughts, hopes, desires, and beliefs. My topic concerns the relations between TBRs and TMKs. So, I restrict my discussion to them without any substantial loss of relevant content.

⁴⁷I follow (Crane ibid.: 13ff). The history of this notion traces back at least to the medieval period. More recently, Husserl uses it throughout his writings and theory of intentionality. Although there are differences in our uses of the notion, we seem to agree when Husserl writes, “It is a serious error to draw a real distinction between [...] “intentional” objects, on the one hand, and “transcendental”, “actual” objects, which may correspond to them, on the other. [...] *The intentional object of a presentation is the same as its actual object, and, when appropriate, as its external object.* [...] The transcendent object would not be the object of *this* presentation, if it was not *its* intentional object” (Husserl 1970: 595–596); see (McIntyre and Smith 1982: 5).

⁴⁸Searle (1983: 18) discusses ‘ordinary objects’ in this context.

Crane (ibid.: 15, 17) tries to explain how intentional objects are not “shadowy intermediaries” by drawing a parallel between the *schematic idea* of object and the *grammatical idea*.⁴⁹ He illustrates this with the example of transitive verbs such as ‘kicked’, ‘played’, or ‘called’. They take objects. (For example, ‘Ernest kicked *the ball*’, ‘Emily played *the piano*’, and ‘Emily called *Ernest*’ each have a *direct object*.) We understand this when we learn grammar. But, we do not need to have a substantial conception of *object* to understand this. Crane writes, “All we need to know is that the object is something which plays a certain role in the sentence” (ibid.: 15). Analogously, when our TBRs (and thoughts, desires, etc.) are about things, those things are intentional objects which merely play a certain role in our truth-apt constructions (or thoughts) but do not have substantial natures; they are not objects in the ordinary, substantial sense. Just as we have a good grasp of objects in the *grammatical sense* (illustrated by our linguistic mastery and understanding of the examples above), we have a good grasp of objects in the *schematic sense* of (intentional) objects of concern.⁵⁰

This strategy lets us accept C3: some TBRs are about things that do not exist, or in other words “there are intentional objects which do not exist” (ibid.: 22 and 25). When we answer ‘Pegasus’ when we are asked what T8 is about, we are talking about Pegasus, the intentional object of T8. But we are not, in this case, referring to anything, since “Pegasus [is] nothing” (ibid.: 25). Now consider T9:

T9: Zeus exists.

According to Crane, “neither Zeus nor Pegasus exists; both Zeus and Pegasus are nothing” (ibid.), but what distinguishes T8 and T9 from each other as intentional states (thoughts or TBRs) is the fact that T8 is about the intentional object Pegasus while T9 is about the intentional object Zeus. According to Crane, this allows one to accept both C2 and C3 as undeniable, while rejecting C1. The way I think that we should understand Crane, then, is to see him as denying that all TBRs are related (or “involve relations” [Crane ibid.: 26]) to the things they are about. Sometimes the things they are about do not exist and are not real, as with T8 and T9. In these cases, the TBRs have intentional objects which they are about, but they are not related to any existing, real intentional objects. This is not to posit some shadowy entity, and this is not to deny either C2 or C3. It is just to deny C1: that all TBRs are *related* to the things they are about.

A consequence of this is that *aboutness* is not always a relation. Sometimes TBRs are not related to the things they are about. “But,” as Crane states, “to say this is not to

⁴⁹Unlike Anscombe (1965: especially 161), however, he does not think that intentional objects *are* grammatical objects or that the idea of an intentional object is a purely grammatical one. This is just a helpful analogy.

⁵⁰See Gorman (2006: 137–138) who is skeptical of the substantial-schematic distinction applying to intentional objects. However, his skepticism is rooted in the fact that Crane does not explain further “how [his] understanding [of] intentional objects [...] permits intentional states to have non-existing objects” (ibid.: 138). My discussion of satisfaction (below) implicitly addresses this worry. Gorman also introduces what he calls “satisfaction-conditions” (ibid.: 140) to address this worry, albeit slightly differently than I do.

say that *no* thoughts [and *no* TBRs] involve relations to real existing things; it is just to say that not all of them do" (ibid.: 26). Often our thoughts and TBRs are *about* things that exist, such as Barack Obama or this very sentence. In such cases, the TBRs are related to the things they are about. In other cases, the intentional objects that they are about are not real, do not exist, and do not have *being* in the sense that I discussed in §1.2.2. This is consistent with the *relations-come-easy* view of relations (§1.4) too, since it should be clear that relations cannot come so easy that there are relations between things that do not exist, or that there are relations between things that exist and things that do not. Sometimes TBRs stand in A-REL to their intentional objects, that is, when they are real; sometimes TBRs do not stand in A-REL to their intentional objects.

One way to understand this more clearly is by using an important notion: the notion of *aboutness-satisfaction*⁵¹ or *aboutness-success*.⁵² I think that we can understand the existence or presence of the relation between TBR and TMK as a *satisfaction* (or *success*) of *aboutness*. In the cases where the intentional objects of the TBRs exist and are real, the TBRs are *related* to the things they are about. Here, there *is* a *satisfaction of the aboutness* of these TBRs. If none of the putative intentional objects of the TBR in fact exist and are real, then the TBRs are *not* related to those putative objects. In this case, there is no *satisfaction of aboutness*. Searle, who also employs the notion of satisfaction, would say that in that case, the TBRs are not about anything at all, even though they might *seem to be* about something (see [1983: 17]). For our purposes, it is enough to think that TBRs can be *about* their intentional objects even if those objects do not exist, but when what they are about exists, then the TBRs are *satisfied* (or *successful*) in regard to their *aboutness*. Aboutness-satisfaction marks the presence of an A-REL.

One should understand T-REL in the same way. When the intentional objects of the TBR exist and are real and the TBR is *about* ways that these objects really are, then there is not just an A-REL going in the direction from the TBR to the TMK, but there is a T-REL going in the direction from the TMK to the TBR.

To make the connection between T-REL and A-REL via *aboutness-satisfaction* clearer, it's useful to contrast it with what I'll call *partial aboutness-satisfaction*. It is an important detail that a TBR is often not just *about* real and existing *objects*, but also about (putatively) real *ways* these objects are (how things are with the object). A TBR which is about an existing and real object can also be false of that object in some way. But, in so far as it is also *about* how things really are with the object, the TBR is at least

⁵¹Searle (1983: 17) introduces the notion of satisfaction in a similar context. According to Searle, intentional states (or TBRs) can have *propositional* or *representational content* or *meaning*, which can fix what the TBRs can be *about*. But unless the entities exist and are real, the TBR is not *satisfied*. He writes, "[I]f there is no object that satisfies the propositional or the representative content, then the speech act and the Intentional state [and the TBR] cannot be satisfied" (ibid.). My understanding of aboutness-satisfaction does not commit us to the existence of propositional content which needs to be satisfied for there to be aboutness. Aboutness and aboutness-satisfaction do not depend on propositional content or sense, or other related notions.

⁵²Ceusters and Smith explain, "'being about' is a success verb" (2015: 3).

partially true of that object. For instance, ‘Donald is a small duck’ is false but partially true in that he’s a duck, albeit a decidedly large one. In §2.4.2.4, I explained that partial aboutness is not satisfactory for T-REL and argued that *fullness* in regard to aboutness is important for T-REL; in the example, for the TBR to be *true*, Donald must be a small duck, not just either a duck or small. Here, we can make clear that what we need is not *partial aboutness-satisfaction* but (*strict and full*) *aboutness-satisfaction*.

The parallel between T-REL and A-REL extends to cases where there is no *aboutness-satisfaction*, or to put it another way, there is a *failure of aboutness-satisfaction*. When there is no relation, and the TBR in question is not about anything real or existing, while at the same time it is committed to the existence and reality of some thing, then the TBR is, strictly speaking, false.⁵³ The TBR is neither *satisfied* in terms of *aboutness* nor is it *satisfied* in terms of *truthmaking*.⁵⁴

Now that we have introduced the notions of aboutness-satisfaction and -failure, and tied them to truth and truthmaking, we can formulate an understanding of truth and falsity in TAAT-ist terms. *Falsehood* on the TAAT is the non-satisfaction or failure of strict and full *aboutness*:

FALSEHOOD-SAC (F-SAC): A TBR which positively describes things to be a certain way is false iff the TBR fails to be *strictly* and *fully* about anything that exists or is real.⁵⁵

⁵³In fictional contexts things get complicated. Although it is clear that T8 and T9 are false, what might one say about a TBR which states that Sherlock Holmes smokes pipes, not electronic cigarettes? One might say that on the TMK-analysis, all TBRs about fictions are false since Sherlock Holmes does not and has never existed. But the right answer, I propose, really depends on what the right SEM-TAC of TBRs about fictions is, and it also depends on the nature of fictional entities. For instance, fictional TBRs might best be understood as talk about texts and what so and so author wrote, rather than about a certain sort of entity which we might call fictional entities, such as fictional people.

⁵⁴I take *aboutness-satisfaction* and *truthmaking-satisfaction* to go hand-in-hand. For, remember, on my account of T-REL, it is a *dual or complementing* relation to A-REL; they are complementing asymmetric relations which go in opposite directions. However, I take it that sub-sentential aboutness present at the level of *words* indicates that truthmaking and aboutness come apart *at the sub-sentential level*. Instead, they are complementing *at the sentential level*. Where there is aboutness-satisfaction at the sentential level, there is truthmaking-satisfaction as well. Sentential-level aboutness, however, should not be taken to be a separate *kind* of aboutness. My neutrality about TMKs (§1.7) makes me agnostic about whether there must be A-RELs and T-RELs at the sentential level that are not reducible to the relations at the sub-sentential level. For instance, the sentential level A-RELs and T-RELs might be plural relations, *composed* of sub-sentential A-RELs and T-RELs. See Dodd (2002a: 74 and 75; 2007: 398) for a discussion of what he calls “sub-sentential language/world relations” (ibid.). Dodd (2002a: 78–81) argues that these sub-sentential-level relations make it that we do not need to posit any sentential-level *entities* to play the TMK-role. Although I remain agnostic about this, I think that the duality of T-REL and A-REL is strengthened by this consideration. For sentential-level aboutness can easily be understood in terms of sub-sentential-level aboutness. We can easily understand ‘the table is round’ being *about* the table and how things are with the table, specifically its being round. The best SEM-TAC might not take the TBR to be about some sentence-level complex entity *the table’s being round* over and above what it is about at the sub-sentential-level, the table and how things are with the table. As I shall make explicit in my discussion in §4.1.2, this further underpins my insistence that my account of truthmaking is *modest*, as there is no requirement that there are *facts* or *SOAs* understood as *complex entities* that need to play the TMK-role; whatever our TBRs are strictly and fully about will play this role, whether or not these are entities, or, more modestly, entities and *how things are with the entities*. See Lewis (1992: 218) and Dodd (2002a: 74).

⁵⁵The reason why I put things this way will become clear in the next section where I distinguish

What the TBR is about, when what it is about exists and is real, is (or are) its TMK(s). Conversely, if instead of failure there is aboutness-*satisfaction*, then there is truth:

TRUTH-SAC (TR-SAC): a TBR is true if it is about things that exist and are real, and it is about how things actually are with those things.⁵⁶

2.6.1 Crane vs Searle on The Problem of Intentionality

To end my discussion of P-INT, I want to point out that Searle (1983) draws importantly different consequences from this talk of *aboutness-satisfaction*, specifically in his answer to P-INT. After introducing satisfaction (quoted above), Searle adds,

In such cases, just as there is no “referred-to object” of the speech act, so there is no “Intentional object” of the Intentional state: if nothing satisfies the referential portion of the representative content then the Intentional state does not have an Intentional object. [1983: 17]

Clearly this Representationalist strategy, as I’ll call it, differs from the Cranean strategy. Representationalists would accept C1 and, instead, would reject C3; that is, they reject the claim that some TBRs are about things which do not exist. If Pegasus does not exist, then there is no “referred-to object,” no intentional object, and T8 is not *about* Pegasus or anything else.⁵⁷

However, this Representationalist understanding of intentionality and aboutness as *requiring* satisfaction is problematic. The whole point, as I understand it, of talking about intentional objects is to be able to point out that Pegasus is the intentional object of TBRs such as ‘John thought about Pegasus’. John is clearly thinking about something; but the thing he is thinking about happens not to exist. The Representationalist clearly thinks that the *aboutness* of any thought or TBR depends on the *satisfaction* of the *referential portion* of the representative content, and hence the *existence* of the A-REL. Crane also points out the infelicity of the Representationalist use of ‘intentional’, with two objections. First, if one uses such terms as ‘intentional object’ and ‘intentional state’ as Searle does (above), then, as Crane says, “I would have said, with Searle, that all

between positive and negative truths (and falsehoods). F-SAC concerns only what are called “positive falsehoods” and not negative falsehoods. More on these later.

⁵⁶In §2.6.2, I explain why TR-AC should not be expressed by a bi-conditional.

⁵⁷Ceusters and Smith (2015) are also Representationalists and capture the core of the view well when they say: “an ICE must in every case be *about* some portion of reality, where the aboutness in question must always be veridical, so that ‘being about’ is a success verb” (ibid.: 3). They contrast ICEs with *representations*, which “in contrast, [are] required merely to intend to be about something, and this intention might fail (as when a child draws what she thinks of as a unicorn)” (ibid.). On their taxonomy, T8 would be both a “Non-referring representational unit (NRU): an RU [representational unit] which, for whatever reason, fails to be about anything” (ibid.: 4; and 2010: 4) and a “Recognized non-referring representational unit (RNRU): an NRU which was once intended and believed to be about something, but which, as a result of advances in knowledge, is no longer believed to be so” (ibid.). It is an NRU (their example is ‘Vulcan’), because we now know that whoever used it in the past and *intended it to be about something* was in error, since there is no portion of reality containing Pegasus (or Vulcan).

intentional objects exist, but that some intentional states have no intentional objects" (2001: 22). But, as he points out, "I would have been at a loss to say what makes this latter class of states [i.e. intentional states concerning things which do not exist] *intentional*" (ibid.). If a state lacks an intentional object, surely this rules out that that state is intentional. Second, Crane thinks that his strategy allows us to understand why T8 and T9 are *about* different things, even though neither of those things exist, while Searle's strategy cannot.

The first is a minor point. In response, Representationalists will just say that we must distinguish between states which are putatively or apparently intentional from ones which are intentional, by having intentional objects. Ceusters and Smith would say that we must distinguish between representations which are *merely intended* but fail to be about portions of reality (NRUs; [2015: 3]) and those that are successfully about portions of reality (ICEs). Searle will just reject that there is any sense in which intentional states which do not have intentional objects are intentional. They *fail* to be intentional, and hence were *only* putative, not real, cases of intentional states.

In regard to the second objection, they would also give a story about how T8 and T9 differ in *representational content*, and not *aboutness* – exactly how they could do this is not our concern, however. If we follow Searle, then all cases of *aboutness* concern A-RELs between TBRs and intentional objects (TMKs), which must exist (or else they would not be *intentional* objects). If we follow Crane, then some cases of aboutness do not involve A-RELs between TBRs and TMKs. Some cases merely involve TBRs and their intentional objects. Others involve TBRs, their intentional objects, and relations to these intentional objects, which must then also exist and be real. Whether we understand *aboutness* in Representationalist or Cranean terms, there is clearly still a strong and useful parallel between A-REL and T-REL.

2.6.2 Cranean vs Representationalist Terminology: *Broad and Narrow Aboutness*

On the Cranean, *broad account* there is TBR-*aboutness* both when there *is a relation*, and when there *is no relation*, between the TBR and the intentional objects it is about. On the Representationalist, *narrow account*, there is only *aboutness* when *there is satisfaction* in terms of *aboutness*, or, in Searle's terms, where there is an intentional object. The latter contrasts *representations* that have aboutness (ICEs [Ceusters and Smith 2015: 3]) with *representations* that one can "intend to be about something" (ibid.), but because the intention isn't satisfied, it isn't actually about anything. The broad, Cranean sense of aboutness doesn't need to introduce representations; instead, it utilises a broadly *schematic sense* of 'intentional object'. It also captures the intuitions that we can talk about things that do not exist, and that there is a difference in aboutness when we talk about different non-existent beings such as unicorns rather than Greek gods.

Henceforth, because the Cranean way of talking about intentional objects is the more natural way of speaking, I shall normally speak this way. Generally, it won't matter which terms I employ. If there is *aboutness*-satisfaction, then the TBRs are *about* something. This is common to both accounts. But, I might *sometimes* use Representationalist terms, on which if there is a failure of *aboutness*, I would say that the TBRs are not *about* anything. I'll make it explicit when I do. If the reader is not comfortable when I slip into Representationalist terms, then read what I say in Crane's terms, with, I think, no loss of relevant content (and vice versa if the reader prefers Representationalism). For instance, many of my discussions concern the ontological status of TMKs, and on both Representationalism, but especially Craneanism, intentional-objects-*qua-intentional-object* have no ontological status or substance of any kind. All that my account requires is that *there is a relation of aboutness* between TBRs and TMKs when the TMKs make the TBRs true, and that it figures in the right account of truthmaking. Both the broad and the narrow sense of aboutness yield the right result in this regard.

However, the broad sense of aboutness is generally preferred. In §3, I use the distinctions and machinery that I have introduced so far, and especially this broad sense, to sketch a strategy for addressing TT's central problem, the *problem of negative truths*. Although I won't argue for this here, it is preferable also in regard to preserving metaphysical modesty (see Appendix §A4.3).

2.7 SAC and Dependence: *A Broadly Externalist View of Content*

TBRs are broadly construed as contentful, truth-apt entities, and they are under certain circumstances related by T-REL to TMKs. But, one might ask, how are *contents* related to TMKs and potential TMKs?

Since TBRs are about their intentional objects, understood as their potential TMKs and their real, existing TMKs when they are true, one might think that this makes TBRs not only depend-for-their-truth on TMKs but also depend-for-their-content on potential TMKs. We might call this the "truthmaker account of content". Since TMKs are plausibly, and often, external objects such as tables and planets, what seems to come out of this and SAC is a broadly *externalist* view of content.

However, Gorman (2006: 142) points out that because intentional objects are sometimes non-existing objects, we cannot give an externalist account of intentional states about them. One might raise a similar worry that many TBRs are about non-external things such as ideas and thoughts.

In response, it is enough for an account of content to be externalist and not internalist that *some* contents are individuated externally; even Gorman (ibid.: 138) agrees. Many TBRs are about real, existing, presumably external beings that are not ideas and

thoughts, but are, rather, such things as tables and tigers. So, some contents are individuated externally. Therefore, the TMK-account of content is externalist, or at least *broadly*, rather than purely, *externalist*.

This broad externalism, however, depends on tables and tigers not being ideas and thoughts. Even though this may turn out to be right, this *metaphysical* issue is not something that the best *semantic* theory of aboutness needs to engage with.

The TMK-account is also broadly *externalist in a slightly different sense* concerning TBRs about non-existing and mental entities. For instance, when one understands the *aboutness* of the TBR 'Margot is the intentional object of Annie's thought', one understands that the TBR depends for its truth not on the existence of Margot, but on the existence of Annie's thought about Margot. Annie's thought must exist and that thought must have Margot as its intentional object for this TBR to be true. Even though such thoughts are *internal* to thinkers, they are *external* to the TBRs about them.⁵⁸

Now, let's say that Annie does not have and never had that thought. How can the TBR's content be individuated by what it's about, if what it's about has never existed?

The answer is that the TBR is still *about* Annie's thought, even though it never existed. The thought doesn't and has never existed, but it is still the intentional object of the TBR. And if Annie were to have that thought, with Margot as its intentional object, then the *aboutness* would be satisfied and it would be the TBR's TMK. The TBR's content is fixed by its potential TMK, its intentional object, whether or not it exists. This is broadly externalist in a more modest sense than before.

We can now answer one lingering question concerning my claim that A-REL and T-REL are dual relations (§2.3) with complementary asymmetries (§2.5): how does this square with the TD-requirement that TBRs depend for their truth on TMKs?

The broad externalism of SAC makes things very congenial to TD. TBRs must be *strictly* and *fully* about their TMKs. Thus, the TMKs are what the TBRs are about. But, the TMKs are (generally) not about the TBRs which are about them. A-REL's asymmetry, indeed, goes from TBR to TMK (see §2.5). But, as we saw here, despite this asymmetry, the contents of TBRs also depend on TMKs, which are broadly external to them. The asymmetry of A-REL, which goes in an opposite direction from T-REL's asymmetry, thus, doesn't even affect the general dependence of *content* on TMKs. There is no reason to think that it affects the general dependence-for-*truth* either. In fact, we can say both that TBRs depend for their *truth*, and that their *contents* depend, on TMKs and potential TMKs.⁵⁹ SAC states that TMKs are what make true TBRs by being what the TBRs are *strictly and fully about*. As we saw in §2.5, TMKs do not generally depend on their TBRs in the relevant way. So, SAC can accommodate the asymmetry central to TD, that TBRs depend for their truth on TMKs (and not the other way around).

⁵⁸Of course, this is setting aside reflexive thoughts.

⁵⁹In Appendix 2, I discuss a small potential worry this might raise.

2.8 The Motivation for Aboutness and the Relevance Objection to Necessitation

Now that I have introduced the main features of SAC, I shall discuss the main motivation for preferring it over its most popular rival, T-NEC. Recall (§2.3) what Smith (1999: 279) calls the “relevance constraint”. It is usually introduced to TT in one of two main ways: either (1) in T-ET versions, by constraining classical ET or replacing it with RELEVANT-ET, or (2) in T-NEC versions, as an *addition* to NEC.⁶⁰ I already discussed ET.⁶¹ So, I’ll focus on NEC, which I articulate thus:

NECESSITATION (NEC): TBR p is made true by TMK x iff in all possible worlds where p exists and x exists, p is true.⁶²

The constraint is motivated by

The Relevance Objection to Necessitation: NEC lets too much that is obviously *irrelevant* for a TBR’s truth count as its TMKs.

This general objection is raised by two separate RELEVANCE PROBLEMS: the problem of necessary truths (P-ONT) and the problem of trivial or malignant TMKs (P-OMT).⁶³ With these, in this section, I argue that NEC is not *sufficient* for TT. In §2.9, I reject T-NEC altogether, and argue that NEC is not *necessary* for TT either. SAC is not a mere addition to T-NEC, but a better rival account.

2.8.1 The Problem of Necessary Truths

Consider

T13: $2+2=4$.

⁶⁰Armstrong (2004: 11) and Jackson (1994: 27ff), to whom both Armstrong (2004: 11–12) and Restall (1996: 334–335) attribute this view before articulating it in more depth than Jackson does, make room for a third way: to restrict the scope of the entailment principle to *contingent* truths or “purely contingent truths” (Armstrong 2004: 11–12), which are truths with no necessary truth in any part of the content or “at any level of analysis” (ibid.). This is not strictly speaking *relevant entailment*, which is a rejection of classical entailment, since it is merely a *restriction* on classical entailment (see [Armstrong 2004: 12]). However, even this third way falls under (1) as it is a version of T-ET. See also (Lopez de Sa 2009: 423).

⁶¹See §2.3 and (Merricks 2007: 23). In §1.3, I eliminate T-ET from our discussion for other reasons.

⁶²This is what Merricks (2007: 7) articulates as *conditional necessitarianism*. I take this to be the metaphysically more neutral and hence more plausible account of NEC. The stronger metaphysical account states that “for all x and all p , x is a truthmaker for p only if x ’s mere existence is metaphysically sufficient for p ’s truth” (Merricks *ibid.*: 5). Armstrong (2003: 12; 2004: 6–7), Fine (1982: 69), Fox (1987: 189), Molnar (2000: 84), Smith (1999: 276) are just a few of the TT-ists who defend and utilise the stronger metaphysical version of NEC. Merricks (2007: 5) states that although such an account is now “truthmaker orthodoxy” (*ibid.*), historical TT-ists such as Russell (1985: 96–7) would reject such a strong metaphysical account based on his views on modality. As should be clear, I sympathise with a rejection of the stronger metaphysical account, but as we’ll see, I also reject the weaker conditional account as it is still too metaphysically immodest.

⁶³Others also discuss P-ONT, such as (Merricks 2007: 22ff) and (Lewis 2001a: 604), and P-OMT, such as (Merricks *ibid.*: 28ff) and (Smith 1999: 278). See especially Merricks (*ibid.*: §2).

According to NEC, T13 would be made true by everything and anything, because it is true in all possible worlds, and thus, for any x , NEC (if x exists, then p is true) is satisfied. T13 is true in every possible world where Merricks's left ear exists. So, his left ear necessitates and would make true that, and every other, necessary truth. It seems that according to NEC, necessary truths have what we might call trivial TMKs which are obviously irrelevant to their truth. NEC seems to overgenerate TMKs for necessary truths. So, it is insufficient to account for T-REL. In response, T-NEC-ists can try to *restrict* the scope of T-NEC somehow. For instance, they might reject TMK-Maximalism and say that only contingent truths have TMKs. But without a principled reason for restricting TT in this manner, this strategy would be *ad hoc*. The challenge for TT is: either reject T-NEC or restrict its scope in some non-*ad-hoc* manner.

2.8.2 The Problem of Malignant TMKs

According to NEC, for any TBR p , *the fact that p is true* necessitates and would thus make true p , because every world in which the two exist is a world in which p is true. However, this is obviously problematic. *The fact that p is true* exists because p is true, and not the other way around. This fact would be a malignant and irrelevant TMK. It should not serve as a TMK for p even if p is true in every possible world that it exists. So, either NEC needs to be rejected altogether, or, if possible, it should be amended to capture how things should be with T-REL in such examples.⁶⁴

Further, it seems that the best explanation for what has gone wrong for NEC here is that *the fact that p is true*, though necessarily connected with p 's truth, is not what p is about. Since they are not related in the right way, the former cannot be the latter's TMK. In these and similar cases, the appropriate NEC-conditions are fulfilled, but T-REL is clearly not present. Therefore, NEC should be rejected, since it is clearly not sufficient for capturing T-REL. Further, since the best explanation of what has gone wrong is based on clear and strong intuitions as to what the TBRs are about, there is a strong case that perhaps aboutness is more important for T-REL than NEC.⁶⁵

2.8.3 Adding the Aboutness Requirement to NEC?

P-ONT and P-OMT are two of the main problems for NEC that also help motivate the *addition* of the *relevance* or *aboutness* requirement of truthmaking. Both problems are motivated by the fact that we think that trivial truthmakers are *irrelevant* to the truths

⁶⁴Merricks (2007: 31–32) has some more interesting examples of the same form.

⁶⁵Smith (1999: 278–279) presents a very interesting and similar case to argue that *aboutness* is necessary for TT. However, his case concerns what he calls “malignant necessitators,” such as *God's willing that John kiss Mary* necessitating the truth of ‘John kisses Mary’. Smith rightly points out that “God's act is not a truthmaker for this judgment” (ibid.: 279). It is thus false that T-REL is nothing more than NEC. What goes wrong is best explained by aboutness reasons.

in question. In the first, we think that not every thing that exists should count as TMKs for necessary truths, because they are irrelevant for their truth. For the second, we see that even if the proposed TMKs are tied in some necessary way to the TBRs, the TMKs must be relevant in the *right way*. T13 is not *about* Merrick's left ear, and T13 is also not about the fact that the TBR T13 is true.

Merricks (2007: §2.2–2.3), who also discusses these or similar problems, thinks that adding aboutness to NEC allows one to rule out such unwanted, irrelevant TMKs. Merricks argues that NEC “is not sufficient for *making true*” (ibid.: 30). He draws the consequence from these examples that “Truthmaker [i.e. T-REL] requires a truth to be appropriately about its truthmaker” (ibid.: 34). This latter is surely a good consequence to draw from the insufficiency of NEC for T-REL. But he goes further. Based on his discussion of similar cases and other things about the tie between NEC and T-REL which he argued for previously (which I won't go into), Merricks writes:

We should conclude that *making true* involves *aboutness*. But we should also stand by the previous chapter's point that *making true* implies (conditional) necessitation. For even if there were nothing more to *making true* than a proposition's being related to that which makes it true by *aboutness*, *making true* would still imply necessitation. This is because that to which a proposition stands in the *aboutness* relation thereby necessitates that proposition. At least, I lose my (admittedly somewhat shaky) grip on *aboutness* if I add that that which a truth is relevantly about need not (even conditionally) necessitate that truth. So I shall assume that Truthmaker implies not only that truths are about their respective truthmakers but also that truthmakers necessitate their respective truths. [ibid.: 34]

Thus, the account of TT that results from considering the RELEVANCE PROBLEMS is one where *aboutness* is *added to save* T-NEC, taking centre stage, as a necessary condition *alongside* NEC.⁶⁶ Both *aboutness* and NEC are taken to be necessary (though not separately sufficient) conditions to capture T-REL.⁶⁷ T-REL is NEC plus A-REL.

However, SAC, as I have presented it so far, does not commit itself to NEC. In fact, I think that the Relevance Objection clearly *undermines* NEC and gives us strong reasons in favour of SAC, not merely to *save* NEC, but to *supersede* NEC, as its more modest rival. In §2.9 (and §4.1.1), I argue for *accepting* SAC and *rejecting* NEC altogether.

2.9 Accepting SAC & Rejecting NEC

It is already clear, from P-ONT and P-OMT, that NEC is not sufficient for T-REL. To reject NEC altogether, I shall now argue for the more controversial claim that NEC is not necessary for T-REL. I first explain the significance of NEC being a *necessary connection*

⁶⁶Let's ignore the fact that Merricks's discussion, in the end, rejects the account of TT he presents.

⁶⁷I assume that he thinks that they are *jointly sufficient*, but he does not make this explicit.

between distinct entities. I then present my argument against NEC being necessary for T-REL and address two potential worries.

If x makes true p , then, according to NEC, if p exists and x exists, then p is true. There is a *necessary connection* between (at least) two distinct existences or objects, p and x (in this case, the TBR and its TMK or TMKs) — even though p and x are distinct entities, p is necessarily a certain way, that is, *true*, if both p and x exist.⁶⁸ Thus, there is a necessary connection between them that is guaranteed to be the case merely by their existing.

Humeans balk at the suggestion that there might be such connections and are, on this basis, normally fundamentally opposed to truthmaking. The main reason for this is that there cannot be a guarantee that there are such necessary connections that hold for all time and in all possible worlds, especially for entities external to us, and which we presumably can only come to know via sense impressions. That there is such a connection, which holds across all time and possible worlds between external entities (both TMKs and TBRs are normally external entities), is something that we should at the very least only accept with very strong evidence. To think otherwise is to be immodestly credulous about metaphysically dubious relations.

However, with SAC, we can reject the inclination merely to add the *aboutness condition* to NEC. For SAC can block the need for NEC as a *general characterisation* of T-REL. SAC does not need to accept the to-the-Humean-unsavoury and generally immodest idea that there are *necessary connections* between distinct objects.

According to SAC, x only makes p true if p is strictly and fully about x . But, its being strictly and fully about x is a contingent matter. For the same TBRs can be about different TMKs at different times.⁶⁹ For example, consider the TBR ‘the painting that I am working on represents the death of John the Baptist’. At time $t1$, this will be true, but once I’ve finished that painting and moved on, at time $t2$, to a painting of the patience-in-suffering of Job, the TBR will be false. For what I am strictly talking about at $t2$ would be another painting, not one depicting the death of John the Baptist.

Remember, it is an open option what the nature of TBRs is (see §1.3). No account of TBRs is essential to SAC, but SAC accommodates BATT’s TBR-pluralism. And importantly, aboutness-change is widespread amongst TBRs. For instance, it is obviously clear that what sentences are about can change over time; this is a well-known fact about language change.⁷⁰ As David (2005: 158–159) explains, this is also the case for token

⁶⁸I follow Cameron’s (2008a: 24ff) illuminating understanding of *necessary connections* here.

⁶⁹In Appendix 3, I give sameness and exact similarity criteria for TBRs in terms of *TMKs at a time* that accommodates this.

⁷⁰Language change in general is a widely studied phenomenon in linguistics. I am mainly concerned with the local level where aboutness can change over short periods of time for particular speakers. However, the prevalence of the phenomenon of language change at all levels, including between language-families, is relevant to and lends support to the points I make on this matter throughout my dissertation. This phenomenon has been closely studied since at least the 18th century (see [Anderson 1973: 8]; see also [ibid.: 7ff] for a quick historical survey of both synchronic and diachronic considerations in histor-

beliefs. Recall, in §1.3, I explained that David [2005:156] argues on this basis that Armstrong's naturalism should lead Armstrong himself to reject T-NEC despite being the arch-T-NEC-ist. So, even if p is strictly and fully about x at some point in time, it might not be strictly and fully about x at some other time. Even though x makes p true at time t , x might not make p true at time t_2 because at time t_2 p might not be strictly and fully about x . The contingency over time also makes clear that there is a general contingency between TMKs and TBRs which stretches across possible worlds. So, p can exist and x can exist in some possible world, and p not be true in that possible world. For, in the context of that world, p is not strictly and fully about x . Thus, we can accept SAC and reject NEC. SAC preserves the asymmetric dependence relation between truths and TMKs, by focusing on what TBRs are strictly and fully about, but it can get rid of any unsavoury necessitation relations between them.

2.9.1 Responses to Possible Objections

There are several possible objections that I want to respond to now. The first is a worry that perhaps I am trading illegitimately here on an unclarity about TBRs. One might object that although what I say is true of sentences and token beliefs, the *real* or *primary* TBRs are propositions. And, propositions cannot change what they are about. For they are essentially tied in some way to what they are about.

My response is that, as I already pointed out in §1.3, we must remain pluralists about TBRs as much as possible and that pluralism is a virtue of my account. The view that propositions are the only *real* or *primary* TBRs is distinctly *anti-pluralist*. Pluralism about TBRs is not an *unclarity* about TBRs. The unclarity-about-TBRs objection, to have any force, raises an epistemic point. Perhaps we *do not know* which are the real or primary TBRs. But, then, one cannot rely on features of sentences and token beliefs to reject NEC. This is because NEC holds between *propositions* and *what they are about*.

There are several ways that I can respond. First, pluralism rejects that anything, including propositions, are the primary or the only *real* TBRs. As long as there are *some* TBRs that are not necessarily connected to TMKs, then NEC is not a necessary condition for T-REL. Despite my independent worries about propositions (which even Armstrong should share [David 2005: 158–159]), let us allow for the sake of argument that there are such things as propositions. Then there would indeed be necessary connections between TBRs and TMKs. However, second, it is also part of my pluralism that there are other kinds of TBRs, such as sentences and token beliefs. What sentences and token beliefs are about can vary from context to context. Further, they are about these

ical linguistics, which as a study “is not limited to the study of the history of one or several related languages, but rather, it inquires into the nature of [language] change itself” [ibid.:2]). (Anderson 1973) is a book-length treatment of the varieties of language change, of which semantic change is the most relevant for us (see [ibid.: 26f and 78ff]).

different things in different contexts *independently* of expressing propositions, *because* their having aboutness is compatible with there being no such thing as propositions. For instance, one can make a sentence be about different things in different contexts *by stipulation*. The meanings of words in languages are flexible enough to allow for this. English words such as ‘cola’ or ‘water’ or ‘vitamin’ can be about an array of different substances, and which substances we are talking about in a given context can vary considerably from when we use these words in other contexts.⁷¹ These differences in aboutness do not have anything to do with propositions but have everything to do with the environment and the use of the words in different contexts. Even if sentences and token beliefs *express propositions*, changes in what the sentences and beliefs are *about*, and changes in what TMKs make them true, happen independently of the propositions they express. Once this is understood, it becomes clear that sentences and token beliefs, etc., are not essentially or necessarily connected with any TMKs. So, given pluralism, one is able to reject NEC as essential for T-REL. Of course, if the only real TBRs are propositions, then there would always be necessary connections between TBRs and TMKs, but this is something that the aboutness account, at the very least, can be agnostic about, or, as I hope to have made persuasive, can reject with modest confidence.

However, there is another worry which one can raise to argue that SAC might not be able to reject necessary connections altogether. One might try to block SAC’s rejection of necessary connections between distinct existents by claiming that the only TBRs that are not necessarily connected to TMKs *are those not involving rigid designators*. Any TBRs which involve rigid designators remain necessarily connected to what they rigidly designate. For example, the TBR ‘Socrates or Plato exists’ and Socrates remain necessarily connected, though they are distinct things; whenever the TBR and Socrates both exist, Socrates makes the TBR true. Thus, one might argue, if I want to reject necessary connections I would have to find something stronger than SAC.⁷²

I think this objection shows that SAC cannot reject necessary connections altogether, but it can reject T-NEC by denying that NEC is necessary for TT.

TBRs are necessarily connected to certain entities by containing rigid designators such as names, which after an initial baptism will, in the world of the baptism, refer to the baptised entities and their counterparts in all possible worlds, that is, necessarily. So, there is a good case to be made that any TBR such as ‘Socrates exists’, which refers to Socrates in all possible worlds (at least from the perspective of worlds where ‘Socrates’ is a name for Socrates), is always going to be strictly and fully about, and, when true, made true by, Socrates.

However, even if we allow this, it is not at all clear that other, non-existential TBRs such as ‘Some Greek philosophers are bald’, ‘I am working on a painting of John’, or

⁷¹Of ‘vitamin’ Jackson, for instance, writes, “The concept of a vitamin is a significant one in the science of nutrition but it is not true that ‘vitamin’ refers to a unified explanatory kind or kinds” (2010: x). This seems to me a good example.

⁷²I thank an anonymous referee at *MIND* for raising this objection.

even ‘Socrates is bald’ can be interpreted in the same way as ‘Socrates exists’. The point I made earlier about the case involving the painting of John still holds and applies also to the cases involving these bald, Greek philosophers. At different times and at different worlds, the TBRs can be and are often strictly and fully about different paintings and different Greek philosophers. Even if TBRs such as ‘Socrates is bald’ are about the same things (and their counterparts) in all possible worlds in virtue of having a rigid designator, it is clear that these other TBRs are, at different times, in different possible worlds, as well as in different contexts, often strictly and fully about different entities and different ways those entities are. A predicate such as ‘... is bald’ is not a name and is not about the same property in all possible worlds. Predicates notoriously shift their aboutness in different contexts, including at different times.⁷³ Thus, even if we agree that rigid designators retain necessary connections between distinct entities and that some TBRs (such as ‘Socrates or Plato exists’) are necessarily connected to their TMKs in a T-NEC way, SAC does give TAAT the resources to reject the claim that NEC is necessary for TT. For most TBRs will not be connected to TMKs by necessary connections. Given these arguments and the RELEVANCE PROBLEMS of the previous section, we can now conclude that NEC is neither necessary nor sufficient for TT. So, SAC gives TAAT the resources to abandon NEC.

To be clear, *rejecting* NEC is not rejecting TT. Mellor (2003: 214–215), for instance, also rejects T-NEC, by considering general truths and even familiar truths. Others, such as Heil (2000: 63–64), Briggs (2012),⁷⁴ Schaffer (2010a: 311),⁷⁵ Parsons (1999: 328ff),⁷⁶

⁷³Just to be clear, one might object that predicates are names for ways things can be, and refer to features or aspects of things. For instance, one might say that the English predicate ‘... is a horse’ refers, in all possible worlds and contexts, to a way things can be or property *being a horse*. In response, I think one can remain agnostic about whether or not predicates name or refer to properties; and this is compatible with the modesty I espouse. My preferred way of looking at things includes *ways things can be* and *properties* as part of what predicates are about. So, in different contexts, times, and places, one is talking in part about the same way things can be when using predicates such as the one-place predicate ‘... is a horse’, namely a way that things can be, *being a horse*. However, sentences such as ‘Some animals on your farm are horses’ when said to different farmers are about the same way things are, namely *being a horse*, but are about different entities who are the same way in this relevant respect. With other predicates, including the one I used namely ‘... is bald’, it is very unclear that one can talk about any same *way things can be* when using the predicate in different contexts. Joe’s being bald and Aaron’s being bald might have very little in common. Most predicates in fact do shift their aboutness. What entities they are about, and what way or ways things are with those entities, change in different contexts. I’m sure there are exceptions but these do not affect my argument.

⁷⁴She replaces NEC with what she calls the “Duplication Principle” (ibid.: 14).

⁷⁵He also rejects NEC elsewhere. See (2008a: 304) where he argues that we should “ditch necessitation for real dependence” (ibid.) to help TT avoid similar problems to the ones I raised in §2.8.1–2.8.2. However, see §5 and especially §5.4.1, where I argue against his substitute for NEC.

⁷⁶Parsons (ibid.) argues against T-NEC by arguing against Armstrong’s (1997: 115–116) account of T-REL, which he calls “truthmaker essentialism” (ibid.), but which is normally called NEC. He rejects NEC thoroughly. In particular, as Cameron (2005: 5) argues, Parsons’s TT-position implies that TT-ists can abandon NEC even for atomic TBRs. Parsons (1999: 329–330) argues that nominalists can be TT-ists and that the TMKs for *p* are just those things which are intrinsically such that *p*. For instance, the atomic TBR ‘A is red’ is made true by A. And since A doesn’t have this intrinsic property essentially, its existence doesn’t necessitate *p*. So, T-NEC is rejected even for atomic TBRs. This is Parsons’s (1999: 329–330) position, but see also (Cameron 2005: 5–6) for critical discussion.

and Cameron (2005: 4–5),⁷⁷ also advocate truthmaking in the absence of NEC. So, plenty of other TT-ists would agree that rejecting NEC is not rejecting TT.

In the next few chapters, I shall bring further challenges to the unfortunately *metaphysically substantial* versions of TT that have arisen out of thinking of T-REL in terms of NEC, and other such *substantial relations*, such as FUNDAMENTALIST GROUNDING (§5). Rejecting NEC and embracing SAC allows us to accept a much more *modest* TT.

2.10 Conclusions

In this chapter, I presented my favoured TAAT-ist way of moving beyond BATT in two novel ways. (1) I fleshed out such an account much more than has previously been done by other TAAT-ists. And (2), I argued that TAAT is not just an addition to NEC, but a rival theory to T-NEC. This was the first step towards my defence of TAAT as a metaphysically modest alternative to rival theories. In the next chapter, I briefly sketch a way of using TAAT and SAC to modestly address one of the central problems for TT, namely the problem of negative truths.

⁷⁷Cameron rejects T-NEC, but doesn't reject NEC as thoroughly as Parsons. Cameron (2005: 5–6) critically discusses Parsons's (1999: 329–330) argument against T-NEC, and argues instead that "although I abandon truthmaker necessitarianism in general, I hold it with respect to atomic propositions, and cannot accept Parsons' theory" (Cameron 2005: 5). Cameron rejects T-NEC because he rejects Truthmaker Maximalism (ibid.: 4–5) and on the basis of counterexamples (ibid.: 5–6). In short, he thinks that there are plenty of non-atomic TBRs that are "made true by things that fail to necessitate their truth" (ibid.: 6). But, he (ibid.: 5) argues, contra Parsons, that atomic TBRs are necessitated by their TMKs. This is because "Consideration of the relation of necessitation lets us identify the truthmakers for atomic propositions", but he continues, "and then, given this new data (i.e. what kinds of thing truthmakers are), we can figure out, hopefully, what the truthmakers are in the more difficult case of non-atomic propositions. And if necessitation fails in these more difficult cases then so be it" (ibid.: 5). I hope to have argued that SAC gives us a plausible *alternative way of identifying* TMKs, without the need for NEC. So, given that Cameron's argument against Parsons for keeping NEC for atomic TBRs rests on his assumption that "we get a grip on this relation [T-REL] only by considering the relation of [NEC]" (ibid.), I hope that SAC gives a *sufficiently* plausible alternative way of getting a grip on T-REL, one that also allows us to abandon NEC altogether.

Chapter 3

Aboutness and Negative Truths: A Modest Strategy

3.1 TAAT and the Problem of Negative Truths

In this chapter, I use the *aboutness*-machinery of TAAT-SAC to sketch a modest strategy for solving the central problem for TT, namely the *problem of negative truths* (P-NEG).

In §3.2, I present P-NEG and discuss proposed solutions in light of Russell's debate with Demos, revealing a central difficulty for addressing the problem. In §3.3, I discuss Molnar's (2000) presentation of P-NEG, and explain in what sense I think there is a *real* distinction between negative and positive. In §3.4, I present the TAAT-ist strategy for solving P-NEG. Finally, in §3.5, I reply to some worries.

3.2 The Problem of Negative Truths & Some Difficulties for Addressing It

P-NEG is the problem of how exactly TT can account for true negative claims such as

T14: Pegasus does not exist.

T15: The cat is not on the mat.

Given their commitment to an asymmetric dependence between truths and reality, TT-ists seem beholden to answer the following two questions: "What does the truth of claims such as T14 and T15 depend on?" and, more specifically, "What are the TMKs for negative truths?" Neither T14 nor T15 seem to describe a way that the world is, but rather purport to describe a way the world is not. And since T14 and T15 are both true, we seem to have a case where there are truths that do not need TMKs. If this reasoning is correct, the TT-ist seems to be stuck with a dilemma: either reject Truthmaker Maximalism (T-M), which states that all truths require TMKs to make them true,¹ or accept

¹Many TT-ists believe in T-M. Many non-TT-ists do too. But many non-TT-ists as well as many

“unsavoury” negative facts, such as *Pegasus’s non-existence* or *the cat’s not being on the mat*, into one’s ontology.

This dilemma is very troubling. On the one hand, if one tries to reject T-M, this rejection cannot be *arbitrary* or *ad hoc*. One must have good independent reasons to restrict the scope of truthmaking. And, in the course of one’s rejection- strategy, one must not fall into positing unsavoury negative entities of any sort. On the other hand, philosophers have been very reluctant to accept negative *beings* (e.g. negative *facts* or negative *properties*) into the right ontology. Russell (1918, 1919), notoriously, accepts negative facts into his ontology without any hesitation on his part, but admits that there is “a certain repugnance to negative facts” (1918: 211), to such an extent that when he argued that there were negative facts, at a lecture in Harvard in 1914, he reports that “it nearly produced a riot” (*ibid.*). To explain this, he writes,

There is implanted in the human breast an almost *unquenchable desire* to find some way of avoiding the admission that negative facts are as ultimate as those that are positive. [1919: 287; my emphasis]

Besides Barker and Jago (2012) who have recently tried to argue that negative facts can be understood positively, there are hardly any contemporary analytic philosophers² who

TT-ists do not. I reject T-M in this chapter. Milne (2005: 222) rejects T-M on the basis of simple counterexamples such as ‘This TBR has no TMK’. Rodriguez-Pereyra (2006b: 190–191) defends T-M against such counterexamples. Asay “adamantly reject[s]” the idea that T-M is a “*sine qua non* of [TT]” (2011: 11). Explicit advocates of T-M include Armstrong (2004: 5; among others), Cameron (2008c: 107–108), and Schaffer (2010a: 309). Molnar (2000: 85) goes so far as to call its rejection “the way of ontological frivolousness [and] a truly desperate resort” (*ibid.*). It is interesting to note, however, that Armstrong, perhaps the most influential TT-ist and T-M-ist, formerly subscribed to a non-T-M view of TT. His first discussions only considered TMKs for contingent truths (1969: 23; 1989b: 88). TT-skeptics such as Dodd (2007: 393–394) and Merricks (2007: 40–41) think that TT-ists should be T-M-ists on the grounds that any TMK-principle must concern *truth in general*, not just *some* truths. Dodd describes remaining a TT-ist while rejecting T-M as “a failure of nerve” (*ibid.*: 394). Most philosophers who take TT seriously consider negative truths, especially negative existentials, to be counterexamples to T-M. See (Bigelow 1988: 131), (Cameron 2005: 4), (Fox 1987: 4), (Lewis 1992 and 2001a), (Linsky 1994: §2), (Mellor 2003: 213–214), (Melia 2005: 69), (Mulligan et al. 1984: 315), (Mumford 2005: 266ff; 2007: 48ff), (Parsons 2005: 167–168; 2006: 601), (Simons 2005: 255–256), and (Smith 1999: 285). Dodd argues on this basis that TT must be weakened (2002a: 74–75) and inevitably rejected (2007: 383–396). See also Merricks (*ibid.*: §3), though he argues that a weakened truth-supervenies-on-being (TSB) view, specifically a “worldwide local TSB” (*ibid.*: §4.3, 85), *can* account for negative existentials. Oliver (1996) thinks that these issues should be approached optimistically. He writes, “all of this is work to be done, so the theory of truthmakers is an avenue for future research” (*ibid.*: 74). Dodd, however, points out that all this future research and fiddling with the details of TT (e.g. rejecting or not rejecting T-M) “is *pointless*” (2002a: 70, fn. 2). My stance is that providing a metaphysically substantial account of TT is pointless, but TT itself is not pointless, because a more modest view is at least plausible.

²Of course, there are plenty of other, non-analytic philosophers who have accepted negative beings, including, famously, Meinong (1904a: 83; see [Berto 2013: 70, and §§5–6] for the varieties of Meinongianism), and phenomenologists, such as Sartre (1956: 42). Sartre seems to provide a kind of realist TMK-account of non-being, when he writes, “non-being does not come to things by a negative judgment; it is the negative judgment, on the contrary, which is conditioned and supported by non-being” (*ibid.*). However, McCulloch (1994: 7–8, 35–36) argues that, as a phenomenologist, Sartre understands ‘*real*’ as “*phenomenologically real*” (*ibid.*: 7) or “*experientially real*” (*ibid.*: 8), where *real* non-beings are understood in terms of what Sartre calls “*living possibilities*” (Sartre: 1956: 80) or, on

are willing to accept negative facts, or negative beings of any sort, into their ontology.³ Accepting negative *beings* into one's ontology is biting the Russellian bullet.

To understand Russell's strategy, we need to understand the subtle distinction between Meinongianism and Russellian negative facts. Russell tries to avoid what is taken to be an *unsavoury* Meinongian ontology, in which there are *things* that do not exist.⁴ By contrast, his view does not commit us to the existence of things that do not exist (e.g. Pegasus), but rather commits us to the existence of the *fact that some thing does not exist* or the *fact that something is not the case*.⁵ Thus, instead of *existing negative things*, we have *existing negative facts*. However, this still makes negativity part of reality, and thus the taste of unsavouriness remains.

Plenty of others have also tried to find TMKs for negative truths. For example, Martin posits "absences" (1996: 57),⁶ which according to him are "non-abstract, [...] *localized* states of the world or universe, and therefore, though not things or natural properties or relations of things, they can serve as [TMKs] for negative existentials" (ibid.: 57–58). Armstrong posits "totality states of affairs" (2004: 58; 1997: 137–8) where *the-world-as-a-totality* is such that there is no cat on the mat.⁷ Cameron (2008b: 415ff;

McCulloch's interpretation, "epistemic possibilities" (ibid.: 36) in the "conscious mental life" (ibid.) of an agent (cf. Hammond et al. 1991: 115). If McCulloch is right, the phenomenologist's account of non-being is not the troubling sort we're concerned with. For, as I would put it, Sartre is *talking about* something else when discussing negative TBRs than we are; he's talking *about* aspects of the conscious lives of agents. This further highlights the importance of the right account of *what TBRs are about* for an account of their truth and TMKs. Thanks to Frank Chouraqi and Maria van der Schaar for illuminating conversations about phenomenology.

³See fn. 8 for more details on their account. Jago (2011) presents some formal results about their theory. Jago (2013b: especially §§4–7) uses their theory to argue that positing negative facts is the best option for T-M-ists, preferable to Armstrong's and Martin's accounts.

⁴Though, see Read (2012), who thinks that the right response to P-NEG is to adopt another version of the TMK-principle, which utilises the terminology of Meinong's Principle of Independence, on which truth supervenes on *so-being* rather than on *being* or on entities. Thus, he advocates the principle which he calls "Supervenience of Truth on So-Being (ST): Truth supervenes on *how things are*: there can be no difference in truth without a difference in *how things are*" (ibid.: 251; my emphasis). Thus, as he understands it, truth depends not on what exists, but, rather, on *how things are*. This is indeed an *attractive* view and is not the aspect of Meinongianism that is normally taken to be unsavoury. See my §1.2 and §4, for the attractiveness of versions of TT in terms of *how things are*, rather than just *whether things are*. See also Yablo's (2014: §5.7) treatment of negative existentials. He claims not to be a Meinongian, but he clearly doesn't think that Meinongianism is as unsavoury as it is normally made out to be. He writes, "Meinong was wrong, let's agree. But the idea of nonexistent objects nevertheless available to serve as referents is not absurd in itself. *Pegasus doesn't exist* fails to be true *only* because this coherent idea is false" (ibid.: 90). Yablo's treatment is sympathetic to, albeit not fully, Meinongian. However, his account of the aboutness of empty names yields results, for instance that TBRs such as 'Pegasus doesn't exist' turn out *not* to be true, which I think we should avoid in our account of the aboutness and truth of such TBRs.

⁵See (Russell 1905: 45) for his "chief" (ibid.) objection, which accuses Meinong's view of *non-existent objects*, such as *the round square* and *the present King of France*, of breaking the law of contradiction. In (Russell 1961a), he writes, "The desire to avoid Meinong's unduly populous realm of being led me to the theory of descriptions" (ibid.: 17). See (J. F. Smith 1985) for a historical and critical discussion of The Russell-Meinong Debate.

⁶See also Kukso (2006).

⁷Armstrong accepts that his *totality state of affairs* or "the *all* state of affairs" (2004: 58) is what he calls "a 'no more' state of affairs" (ibid.) and hence partially negative (ibid.). However, he thinks that his account is far more economical than Russell's, since it posits only one negative state of affairs

2008d: 295) says that the essence of the world itself makes true all negative truths. The problem with these views is that each of them still posits some sort of negativity in the world in addition to the positive, though perhaps in a more palatable manner than Russell or Meinong. To accept this, one must be willing to bite the Russellian bullet and leave that “unquenchable desire” (1919: 287) unsatisfied.⁸

Instead, one might attempt to address the dilemma’s first horn by restricting TT’s scope to a subset of primary truths, such as positive truths. For instance, on the so-called “moderate view” (Mellor 2012a: 96; see also [Heil 2000]):

[O]nly some truths, the primary truths, have truthmakers, while other truths and falsehoods are derivable from the primary truths by means of truth-conditional semantics. [Forrest and Khlentzos 2000: 3]

Similarly, according to the Wittgensteinian version of *logical atomism*, labeled “optimalism” by Simons (2000: 17) and MacBride (2014: §2.2), “[I]t is only atomic propositions that represent the existence of states of affairs” (ibid.). On this view, negation ‘ \neg ’ is understood purely as a truth-functional connective and TBRs with negations are understood as molecular TBRs, mere negations of atomic TBRs. Negative truths, understood as true TBRs with negations, get their truth-values, as Mulligan et al. write, “simply in virtue of the fact that the corresponding positive sentences have no truth-maker” (1984: 315). Or, as Simons says, they get their “truth by default” (2008: 14; also 2005: 255). On this account, negative truths do not require TMKs, for they are not atomic truths, all of which must be positive.

It is an interesting historical fact that by contrast to these philosophers who think that logical atomism (or something similar) can address P-NEG, Russell (1918: 211ff) claims that one must posit negative facts for negative truths *on the basis* of his logical atomism. His basic point is that there is no way to account for negative truths without positing negative facts, even on a logically atomistic theory where only atomistic truths are made true and only atomic facts exist. If Russell is right, then any strategy such

(the one that *closes* the aggregates) while Russell posits one for every negative truth.

⁸For why negative facts are so repugnant, see especially Molnar (2000: 76–77, and 84–85), who argues that everything that there is must exist *positively*. And since negative facts are not positive, they are debarred from the realm of being. In direct response, Barker and Jago (2012: 121) claim that “negative facts exist in just the same sense of ‘existence’ as positive facts (and every other kind of being). Negative facts are non-mereological wholes just as positive facts are and so have the same kind of existence. What differs between negative and positive facts is the kind of non-mereological composition involved” (ibid.: 121). They continue, arguing that negative facts conform to an acceptable Eleatic principle concerning their causative role, “including their roles in causation, chance-making and truth-making, and in constituting holes and edges” (ibid.: 117). There is no space to go into their new theory of negative facts in depth. For further discussion of the causal efficacy of negative entities see (Goldman 1977), (Schaffer 2004), and (Sorensen 2008). In arguing for the causal nature of perception, Goldman (1977: 281–282), for instance, argues that we perceive black holes in virtue of the fact that we perceive the absence of light, which is caused by them. Sorensen also extensively defends the view that we are constantly causally interacting with absences (such as shadows and such things as black letters), which he calls “dark things” (ibid.: 29, *passim*), by directly perceiving them (vindicating the causal theory of perception). Schaffer (2004: *passim*) has plenty more examples.

as the moderate/optimalist view cannot merely assume that negative truths can be accounted for by primary or atomic truths. Let me explain his reasoning.

Purely as an example, take Mellor's (2012a: 105) ingenious strategy for accounting for negative truths. Let's take it (following Mellor's notation) that $\langle P \rangle$ is a primary TBR and S is its TMK. Mellor (ibid.) explicitly states that ' $\langle \text{not-}P \rangle$ [which he takes to be a non-primary TBR] is true if and only if S does not exist' is acceptable on the moderate view because $\langle P \rangle$ and $\langle \text{not-}P \rangle$ must satisfy the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle. Negative truths, according to Mellor, are truth-functions of primary propositions, and can satisfactorily be accounted for by the existence of TMKs for the *primary truths* and the laws of logic applied to *them* to form non-primary propositions.

Russell would argue that this won't work and is the wrong way to understand negation and falsehood. Mellor's strategy is similar to Demos's (1917), to which Russell is responding (1918: 211–214). The question Russell presses on Demos is: how should we interpret 'not- p '? Russell summarises Demos's proposal thus, "when we assert 'not- p ' we are really asserting that there is some proposition q which is true and is incompatible with p [...] That is [Demos's] suggested definition:

'not- p ' means 'There is a proposition q which is true and is incompatible with p .'" [Russell 1918: 213]⁹

Mellor's appeal to the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle to explain the non-primary status of negative truths is similar to Demos's proposal; it seems merely to re-describe the *incompatibility* which is central to Demos's strategy as a law of logic. Russell responds to Demos in several ways, but the main line of response is to explain that this strategy, as he writes, "makes incompatibility fundamental and an objective fact, which is not so very much simpler than allowing negative facts" (ibid.). According to Russell, if one tries to interpret or define negation, 'not', in this way, then one is reducing it to incompatibility. Unless there is a corresponding primary incompatibility-fact to which 'that p is incompatible with q ' corresponds, then we are left with an *unexplained molecular* fact, since the *fact that p* cannot account for the molecular *fact that p is incompatible with q* and 'incompatible' just means 'not compatible'.¹⁰ Similarly, appeal to the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle, as Mellor does, cannot do the job, as the truth of logical laws requires as much explaining as the truth of anything else. And further, I would add, these laws mention negation, so negation cannot be explained in terms of them.

Russell's problem, for atomist strategies and for strategies similar to Demos's, is one that everyone in the literature who aims to take the first strategy, of denying T-M, must address. Specifically, they must explain how to account for negation, and for the

⁹Demos says, "The word "not" is precisely a symbol for this qualifying predicate [i.e. "opposite," or "contrary," or "inconsistent with" (ibid.)], and "not- p " means "opposite, or contrary, of p " (1917: 191).

¹⁰Following my discussion in §2.4.2.2, we might say that *that p is incompatible with q* is collateral information, information that is not part of the content of '*that p* '.

truth of negative truths, in such a way as to avoid commitment to negative facts or incompatibility facts.

Thus, we need to find a strategy to accept TT, whether in the T-M-ist form, which would posit *some sort of non-repugnant TMK*, or in the restricted, moderate non-T-M-ist form, which would explain why some TBRs do not need TMKs for their truth.¹¹

3.3 A Note on Addressing Molnar (2000)

Molnar (2000: 84–85) presents P-NEG with four claims, each independently compelling for TT-ists:

(M1) The world is everything that exists.

(M2) Everything that exists is positive.

(M3) Some negative claims about the world are true.

(M4) Every true claim about the world is made true by something that exists.

The problem is: (a) given M1–M4, TT-ists are compelled to provide positive TMKs for negative truths, but (b) non-repugnant, positive TMKs are not forthcoming.

Broadly, the two main problem-solving strategies are: (1) reject one of M1–M4, or (2) somehow reject Molnar's picture of the problem altogether. My proposal is that SAC has the resources to allow us to successfully take strategy (1) by rejecting M4 in a non-arbitrary, intuitive way.

3.3.1 Cameron and Parsons's Strategy, and the Real Distinction between Negatives and Positives

Before I move on, I want to discuss a strategy that rejects Molnar's picture of the problem altogether. Cameron (2008b) and Parsons's (2006) claim not to understand what the distinction between negative and positive *things* is; 'negative' and 'positive' each applies, at best, only to *representations* and not to *things*. Cameron writes,

¹¹Dodd calls these two strategies "the horns of a nasty dilemma" (2007:386). One might think, however, that these strategies are not exhaustive, but serve as a good guide to the two best (but still nasty) potential strategies for the TT-ist. Mumford (2007) tries to take a third way and aims to retain T-M but to "eliminate" (ibid.:51ff) negative truths, on the following basis. The best philosophical account of them is to treat them all as falsehoods, and then to give a theory of falsehoods as not requiring any metaphysical commitments. His answer, as he admits (ibid.:67), disrespects the "everyday conception of truth" (ibid.) while respecting "the metaphysical commitments of truth, as [TT] represents them" (ibid.). My account aims to respect the everyday conception of truth and the right view of TT that it entails. The main difference between our strategies is that while he eliminates negative truths and reduces them to falsehoods, I aim to respect negative truths by maintaining the distinction between them and equivalent falsehoods, within the framework of a more modest version of TT. In §3.5.2.4, I argue that my view is more conservative than his.

[W]hat is 'negative ontology'? What is it for a thing to be positive or negative? I have no idea. [...] I don't believe this is my fault. Being positive or negative seems to apply, in the first case, to representational entities such as propositions. [...] Most things are not representations, so it seems that we can call them 'positive' or 'negative' in a derivative sense at best. [2008b: 412–413¹²]

Parsons (2006: 591–592) claims not to understand what it is for *things* to be *positive*,

Just what is it for a chair, a person, or a rock to be positive? I have honestly no idea. Whatever sense of 'positive' is meant here, it must be different from the unclear, but not totally opaque, sense in which the proposition 'there are chairs' is a 'positive proposition'. The latter has something to do with the representational properties of the proposition in question; but a chair does not represent anything, so it is not positive in that sense. [ibid.]

I sympathise with their strategy. Let's assume that the distinction is indeed much clearer as applying to *representations*, and that negativity and negation are features of *representations*, not of *things*.

However, even if the distinction does not apply to *things*, there is an important sense that is compatible with this, in which there is a *real* distinction between negative and positive, where the distinction applies not just to *representations* but to *reality*. For example, there is a *real distinction* between the sweater I am wearing being yellow and the sweater I am wearing not being yellow. There is a *real* difference between the sweater being some way and its not being that way, even if this is not a difference between features of things, features which the things *have*. The sweater *not being some way* is not a *feature of* the sweater. The distinction is not, and was never supposed to be, between *positive features* of things nor between *positively existing* facts in the world. For the sweater not being some way is not a *positively existing fact*. Rather, the distinction is between *things being some way* and *things not being some way*. When I say that the sweater I am wearing is not yellow, if what I say is to be true, then the sweater must not be yellow. There is a clear distinction between the sweater's being yellow (in which case what I say would be false) and the sweater's not being yellow, which is no fact at all.¹³ This distinction is not merely representational but real. In the

¹²Cameron (ibid.: 413) critically discusses Molnar's M2. However, he is best understood as rejecting not just M2, but the assumptions about negative ontology which lie behind Molnar's whole way of setting up the problem. His positive solution is that the world has all its properties essentially. The world, according to him (ibid.: 415ff), makes true all negative truths. He doesn't, however, explain how this solution addresses Molnar's set-up except to argue that Molnar doesn't provide "any particular reason for thinking that negative truths resist truthmaking" (ibid.). This is because he rejects the idea of a real distinction between negative and positive. According to him, "The only problem worth taking seriously [...] is the intuitive dissatisfaction with the extant accounts of such truthmakers [for negative truths]" (ibid.). I try to answer the problem, as construed by both Cameron and Molnar, though I don't have space to address Cameron's positive account directly.

¹³In the next paragraphs, I explain why *the sweater's not being yellow* is no fact at all.

former case, the sweater really is that way, and, in the latter case, the sweater really is not that way.¹⁴

In response to my claim that *the sweater's not being yellow* is not a fact at all, one might say, "But, as a matter of *fact*, my sweater is not yellow, but green." One might naturally think, on this basis, that *the sweater's not being yellow* is a fact, a *negative fact* that contrasts with another fact, *the positive fact that my sweater is green*.

In a loose way of speaking about facts, as true TBRs, this is correct. No one, including Cameron and Parsons, denies that there is a distinction between negative and positive TBRs, marked at the very least by the presence or absence of a negation. *Negative facts* of the true-TBR sort are not at issue. The problematic, unsavoury sort are negative facts understood as Russellian complex, structured *entities*. But, Russellian facts are complex, structured entities that are constructed out of properties and the objects in which the properties in question are instantiated. The reason why *the sweater's not being yellow* is no fact at all (as I say above) is that *not being yellow* is not a property. Rather, it is a lack of a property; it is nothing at all. Not even Russellian facts can be constructed out of nothing. So, *the sweater's not being yellow* is not a Russellian fact, that is, a structured, complex *entity* over and above the sweater and how things are with the sweater. Yet, as I have argued, the distinction between *the sweater's being yellow* and *the sweater's not being yellow* is a *real* distinction marking *real differences* not to do merely with *representations* (or TBRs) but with *reality*.

3.4 SAC's Solution to the Problem of Negative Truths

As Russell implies in his criticism of Demos (Russell 1918:213), a theory of negative truths is also a theory of falsehood. In §2.6, we saw that SAC can give us a theory of falsehood in terms of *aboutness-satisfaction failure*:

F-SAC: A TBR which positively describes things to be a certain way is false iff the TBR fails to be *strictly* and *fully* about anything that exists or is real.¹⁵

¹⁴I am using 'really' here not in the sense that has become popular from the work of Fine (2001: 25ff) and Cameron (2008a: 6f; 2010a: 251; 2010b: 8ff) where there is a distinction between really existing and merely existing, marking out two types or ways of existing. See Hale and Wright (2009:186) for a criticism of the distinction. Instead, I use 'really' or 'real' in the non-technical, everyday sense where it is contrasted with such adjectives as 'illusory' (see [van der Schaar 2011: 409]). There are not two types of object or ways things can be, the real and the not-real; only when objects are real are they objects, and only when *the ways that they are* are real are they those ways. As Austin (1946: 87) explains, 'real' is not a determiner and only makes sense in the context in which doubts have been raised or some hypothetical (or even fictional) context is explored. See (van der Schaar 2011: 410) for a helpful exposition of this sense of 'real' in the context of distinguishing between illusory and real cognitive acts. Also, she (2011: 398–399) helpfully explains that adjectives such as 'illusory' and others such as 'fake', 'mock', or 'sham' are *modifying adjectives*. Unlike *attributive adjectives* such as 'German', in which case one can infer 'Jack has a pistol' from 'Jack has a German pistol', one cannot infer 'Jack has a pistol' from 'Jack has a sham pistol'.

¹⁵Remember, F-SAC concerns positive falsehoods, not negative falsehoods. Negative falsehoods are made false by what are called *falsemakers*. For example, 'there are no dogs' is false since it is about

With F-SAC, we get an answer to the *problem of intentionality*. We can explain the falsity of T8 (Pegasus exists) and T9 (Zeus exists) in terms of their failure to be about anything (in the narrow, Representationalist sense of aboutness) or about anything that exists or is real (in the broad, Cranean sense). T8 and T9 are *positive falsehoods*. There are also converse TBRs which are not positive falsehoods but are, rather, *negative truths*:

T14 (Not-T8): Pegasus does not exist; or equivalently, Not-(Pegasus exists).

T16 (Not-T9): Zeus does not exist; or equivalently, Not-(Zeus exists).

T14 and T16 are negative existentials. By contrast, T15 is a negative truth that we might call “a negative predicative truth”, since, as it says, the cat is not on the mat.

Recall, what I called the account of truth in terms of *aboutness-satisfaction*:

TR-SAC: a TBR is true if it is *strictly* and *fully* about things that exist and are real and about how things actually are with those things.

The reason why I did not put this in terms of a bi-conditional is because sometimes truths, such as T14 and T16, are also not about anything (speaking as a Representationalist) or not about anything that is real (Cranean), but they are still true. So, one cannot insert ‘only if’ into TR-SAC to make it a bi-conditional, because it is possible for a TBR to be true, and for it to be the case that *what the TBR is about* does not exist and is not real. In short, some truths are negative truths. We can clearly distinguish them from positive truths on the basis of what they are about. And they are true for other reasons than that they are related to existing and real beings. Specifically, they are true on the basis that they are not related to those beings! Let me explain.

In the case of T14 and T16, the TBRs are about things that do not exist and are not real, but the TBRs are also true. But it would seem that according to F-SAC, if they do not exist and are not real, then the TBRs should be false. However, T14 and T16, and T15, are not *fully about* things that do not exist and are not real. Rather, T14 and T16 are *fully about* these things *not existing*. What should make these TBRs true is not the *positive existence* or *reality* of anything at all, and especially not something negative. Instead, the reason they are true, when they are true, is that what they are *in part about* does *not* exist. In SAC terms, they are *strictly* and *fully* about certain putative entities *not existing*. In particular, even if T14 is strictly about Pegasus, it is only *partially* about Pegasus. It is *fully* about Pegasus *not existing*. For T14 and T16 to be true, the things *that they are strictly and partially about* need to be how they

dogs not existing and there are dogs. Thus, dogs are falsemakers for this TBR. The language of SAC can help us understand the notion of a falsemaker. Negative TBRs are *fully about* some entities not existing (in the case of negative existentials) or some entities not being some way (in the case of negative predications). However, the entities and how things are with the entities which are being *denied* in the negative part of TBR are what the TBR is *strictly about*. Normally, the entities, and how things are with the entities, that the negative TBRs are *strictly about*, but which are denied by their *full aboutness*, are the *falsemakers* for these TBRs.

are described; in these cases, they should *not* be any way. That is, there should *not* be a relation between the TBRs T14 and T16 on one side, and Pegasus and Zeus on the other, or else things would not be how they are described to be. For T15 to be true, what it is strictly and partially about, that is, the cat, should *not* be some way. It is strictly and fully about the cat not being some way. To think otherwise, and to think that what they are about must be positive, is to misunderstand what these TBRs are strictly and fully about.

The Representationalist would have a hard time expressing this. Strictly speaking, according to the Representationalist, T8 and T9 are not about anything, and thus their falsity is explained by their aboutness-failure. However, one cannot merely claim that T14 and T16 are not about anything in the same way, since they are also true. T14 and T16 are *about* some putative entities not existing. If the Representationalist claims that they are true because T14 and T16 are satisfied in terms of *aboutness*, this seems to be committing her, paradoxically, to the (positive) reality of non-existence. Alternatively, the Representationalist seems forced to say that some TBRs, those which are not about anything, are nonetheless true. This is counterintuitive and at best awkward.

We can better express ourselves with the Cranean way of understanding aboutness and intentional objects. T14 and T16 are in part *about* Pegasus and Zeus (as T8 and T9 are *fully about* Pegasus and Zeus); Pegasus and Zeus are the intentional objects of T14 and T16 (and T8 and T9). But Pegasus and Zeus do not exist and are not real. They are just intentional objects, in the schematic sense of being what the TBRs are about. And sometimes the intentional objects of the TBRs do not exist and are not real. This, I think, fits neatly with a good semantic account of true negative existentials and other negative truths. They are in part about things that do not exist and are not real; they just differ from true *positive* existentials such as 'Barack Obama exists', in that they are *negative* existentials and hence claim *about those things* that they do *not* exist, or that they are *not* real. Surely, nothing positively existing needs to exist for those kinds of claims to be true. In fact, for those claims to remain true, the things they are about must remain nothings. I take it that this is consistent with what Mumford (2007) says when he tries to persuade his readers of the non-existence of negative facts:

A fact [...] is taken to be some kind of existent in the world. [...] But [...] can it really be a fact in the world that there is no hippopotamus in the room? This sounds like an absence of a fact, and an absence is nothing at all. [ibid.: 46]

Even though this might disappoint those, such as Russell or Barker and Jago, who believe in negative facts and negative entities, there is no need to understand these nothings as *non-existent entities*, or any *entities* or *objects* in a substantial sense (§2.6). Rather, they are, in the case of the false TBRs and the negative truths, nothing except the *schematic*, intentional objects of our thought, of our attention, and of TBRs. In general,

intentional objects are not always real, for instance when aboutness is not satisfied, nor do they need to be posited as real existing entities. In fact, especially in the case of negative existentials, they should not be real, existing entities at all. Under the Cranean understanding of ‘about’, unlike the Representationalist (as I am calling them), one does not need to posit the reality of non-existence. Instead, one gets the right result: for their truth, negative truths require things not to be some way; they do not require things to be any way, least of all some *mysterious* negative way.

SAC shows us how to reject T-M (and Molnar’s M4 above) in a way that is not arbitrary. The right SEM-TAC, if the Cranean framework for thinking about intentionality is right, requires merely that we make a distinction between cases where the intentional objects exist and are real, and the cases where they do not exist and are not real. And, it is clear that we can easily distinguish between positive and negative TBRs in general. The former are used to claim that some thing exists or is some way, the latter are used to claim that some thing does *not* exist or is *not* some way.

Further, with this strategy we do not need to posit underlying or fundamental *incompatibility* facts, as Demos’s strategy does according to Russell and as many recent strategies would need to do. For instance, negative truths do not need to be explained in terms of entailments from primary or atomistic truths (in Mellor’s moderate case) nor by an ontology of totality facts or essence-facts (in Armstrong and Cameron’s *ontological* strategy). With the alternative strategies, we were left with the dilemma of accepting *incompatibility facts* or rejecting T-M in a rather arbitrary or unexplained way. The SAC-strategy gives us the resources not to have to accept *incompatibility facts*, and to draw our rejection of T-M along non-arbitrary, *aboutness lines*. Non-negative, positive truths are about things that exist and are real, and about how things really are with those things. Negative truths and falsehoods are about things that do not exist or are not real, or they are about real and existing things but claim that they are *not* some way. It is clear that a negative TBR does not require a *negative entity* to make it true, if we are clear about what we are talking about.

3.5 Responses to Potential Objections

I now respond to some potential objections.

3.5.1 Objection 1: *Higher-Order Incompatibility?*

One might object that my account of falsehood in terms of *failure of aboutness-satisfaction*, and my account of negative truths being about things not being some way, posit some sort of higher-level incompatibility fact. This, I think, would be to misunderstand what it is to fail in terms of aboutness-satisfaction.

Failing is indeed incompatible with succeeding. But this incompatibility is not what makes anything true (except perhaps TBRs about their incompatibility). When I claim,

for instance, that in the case of T8, we have a falsehood because of a failure of aboutness-satisfaction, I am not saying that there is something, a *failure*, which is incompatible with a success of aboutness-satisfaction. When we talk about failings or failures of something, we are saying that something is missing, not that there is a *missing*. In the same way that T14 does not require anything to exist (and especially not Pegasus) to be true, but instead relies on some putative thing (namely Pegasus) not existing, truths about failings and failures of something do not require anything to exist to be true. Rather, they require there *not* to be something. In the case of TBRs about failures of about-satisfaction such as ‘T8 fails to be about anything that exists’, there must *not* be a relation between T8 and what it is about. To think that this failure requires some incompatibility fact, or some further, higher-level negative fact, would be to misunderstand the account and to misunderstand what TBRs about failures of aboutness-satisfaction (or about failures of anything) are about.

3.5.2 Objection 2: *Does My Account Make Truth and Truth-making Disunified?*

One might worry that the accounts that I gave of truth and falsity, and the subsequent strategy for responding to P-NEG, make truth and truthmaking disunified in a way that is both *arbitrary* and *radical*. What results, as the objection might go, are different stories about positive falsehoods, negative truths, and positive truths, with nothing unifying them. This seems, further, to go against the aims of any account of truth (or falsity) and of truthmaking. I shall respond to these potential objections in turn.

3.5.2.1 Response 1: *My Account is not Arbitrary, but Piecemeal*

First, my account is not arbitrary. In fact, I see no good basis for thinking that a theory of truth must account for *all truths in exactly the same way* or that *a theory of truthmaking must account for all truths in the same way*. A unified theory which does this without any costs, would perhaps be more attractive than a disunified theory. However, as the recalcitrance of P-NEG indicates, such a unified theory is not forthcoming.

Any theory which is disunified, of course, must not make arbitrary distinctions. My approach is *piecemeal*¹⁶ and allows us to make non-arbitrary distinctions, based on what I take to be plausible grounds, and in a plausible, intuitive way, consisting broadly of two steps:

(Step One): look closely at what the words in a TBR mean, and how they contribute to its meaning and what it is about, and

(Step Two): only on the basis of what the TBR says about how things are should we accept an account of what makes it true.

¹⁶ In (Schipper 2016), I also sketch the importance of a contextualist and piecemeal approach to philosophical, as well as social and political, questions more generally.

If what the TBR says and is about does not make any claims or demands on what exists, and/or how things are with what exists, then it seems perfectly reasonable that things do not need to be any way, and, in fact, things should not be the way they are described not to be for those TBRs to be true.

Thus, it seems perfectly reasonable that there are no TMKs for those truths. As we have seen, positive and negative claims clearly differ in what they say about how things are or how things are not. It is, therefore, to be expected, that their truth and falsity should also differ according to what they say about how things are and are not. Not only does what makes them true, when they are true, differ depending on what they are about, but whether or not they are made true, or should be made true, by anything at all can differ depending on what they are about. This can be approached in a *piecemeal* manner by looking closely at what the TBRs are about.

3.5.2.2 Response 2: *My Strategy is not Radical, but Conservative*

Second, my strategy is not radical, either. This piecemeal or contextual approach to whether or not TBRs require TMKs is much more modest and conservative, and hence less radical, than a unified approach that makes the bolder and more extravagant claim that *all truths are true in exactly the same way* and that all truths *must be made true in exactly the same way*. The latter approach tries to fit all truths into the same mould and must explain, despite difficulties and despite appearances to the contrary, how this is the case. *P-NEG*, as I see it, is one of those major difficulties that make it *appear* that truth is disunified. The more radical approach is one that explains that the appearances are faulty. The more modest, and less radical, approach is one that accepts that the appearances are correct, but explains how TT can accommodate the appearances.

3.5.2.3 *Truth is a Success Term*

Further, 'truth' is a success term. The property *being true* is what one might call a "*success-property*". In this way, one might think of truth as similar to other success terms and properties, such as those involved in the winning of games. Just as there is *no unity* with regard to winning games, there is no reason to think that truth and truthmaking should have any unity either. It is highly contextual and depends from game to game what the criteria are for winning any particular game. Even within games, there are sometimes many different ways that one can win. For instance, one can win at chess either by putting one's opponent in a checkmate position or by putting one's opponent in an impossibly difficult position, not quite checkmate, but one which makes her forfeit the game. Also in backgammon, one can win in different ways. Most standardly one wins by getting one's pieces off the board before one's opponent. But one can also win if one's opponent "drops the stakes", that is, resigns after one has doubled the stakes of the game. In some games, there are no ways to win at all, such as with games that have no criteria for winning (for example, continuous play games such as the game of LIFE or

non-competitive Frisbee; they have rules for game-play but no rules for winning). Also, some card games are such that one can win by winning all the chips or tokens in play while others are such that one wins by losing all one's chips or tokens. In the same way as the rules for successfully winning may vary greatly from game to game, it seems that the rules for a TBR to succeed at being true might also vary greatly from TBR to TBR. And it seems perfectly modest and plausible to think that the criteria for truth vary according to what the TBRs are strictly and fully about. Such disunity is far from radical and seems plausibly commonplace.

3.5.2.4 *My Strategy Lets Us Conserve Classical Logic*

My proposal is also less radical than other proposals in other ways. Let me briefly illustrate this with a comparison. Mumford (2007) rejects Molnar's M3 on the basis of giving a "philosophical account" (ibid.: 53) of negative truths in terms of equivalent falsehoods, reducing the former to the corresponding instances of the latter. For example, the "correct philosophical account" (ibid.) of 'It is not raining', when true, is nothing more than that 'It is raining' is false. So, he rejects the claim that some negative truths about the world are true by "eliminating all negative truths" (ibid.: 51). Mumford (ibid.: §7, 57–58) admits, however, that this solution requires us to revise classical logic, or at least to "reinterpret certain claims in the light of the new equivalences" (ibid.: 57). In particular, he thinks that all that we need to do is to understand the *law of excluded middle* (LEM) in terms of bivalence (BIV). The law is:

LEM: $\forall p (p \vee \neg p)$

If understood in the following way, we are committed to the possibility of negative truths:

LEM*: $\forall p (true\langle p \rangle \vee true\langle \neg p \rangle)$

This is not acceptable to a view that attempts to eliminate negative truths. Mumford claims he has a principled reason for understanding LEM in terms of BIV, which is:

BIV: $\forall p (true\langle p \rangle \vee false\langle p \rangle)$

However, this seems to me to be a rather radical interpretation, since LEM and BIV are not the same principle and should be understood independently, even if they are equivalent. First, whatever the merits of classical logic, understanding LEM in terms of BIV rules out being able to even express other logics which are not bivalent, but which accept LEM. Second, it is radical because my new, rival strategy will allow us to understand LEM in terms of LEM*, rather than BIV. Mumford (ibid.: 58) argues that his interpretation will be able to account for TBRs about the future better than LEM*. Consider the TBR

P1: There will be a sea battle tomorrow.

Let's say that P1 is neither true nor not true now. According to Mumford, if one accepts LEM*, then "when [one] thought $\neg t[true] \langle p \rangle$, then [one] would have to accept $t[true] \langle \neg p \rangle$ " (ibid.). The problem according to him is that there is no TMK for $\langle p \rangle$ nor one for $\langle \neg p \rangle$. His suggestion is to understand LEM as BIV, on which $\neg true \langle p \rangle$ is understood as *false* $\langle p \rangle$, which, according to him, doesn't require a TMK. My strategy allows us to avoid the problem he raises for accepting the equivalence of $\neg true \langle p \rangle$ with *true* $\langle \neg p \rangle$, remaining conservative by not having to radically reinterpret LEM as BIV. It does not matter that $\langle \neg p \rangle$ does not have a TMK according to my account, because $\langle \neg p \rangle$ is not a positive claim, and hence does not need one; in fact, one will realise that it should not have a TMK, if one understands what it is about. Thus, my account is at least less radical than Mumford's and allows us to interpret laws such as LEM in the standard way.

3.5.2.5 *Knowing Which Terms are Truth-entailing is Essential to Understanding What the TBRs are Fully About*

There is also another reason why it is not radical. The distinction between negative truths and positive truths is not the only distinction that can be made on the basis of aboutness and being careful about what exactly TBRs are strictly and fully about. Consider

T17: Pegasus is a mythological animal.

and

T17*: Vulcan is a hypothetical planet.

Both T17 and T17* are true. However, neither Pegasus nor Vulcan exist. As I discussed in §2.4.2.1, some predicates such as '... is material', '... is an animal', and '... is a planet' are existence-entailing and others such as '... is mythological', '... is a mythological animal', and '... is a hypothetical planet' are not. We understand this on the basis of thinking about what kinds of predicates these are, what they mean and are about. Understanding that these predicates are not existence-entailing, and understanding what they say about the things that they are used to talk about, is essential for understanding that these kinds of claims, while positive, also do not require TMKs.

Thus, understanding *what we are strictly and fully talking about*, also helps us to understand which positive truths require TMKs, and which do not require TMKs, not just that negative truths do not require TMKs. This, I think, is a perfectly reasonable way of understanding the connection between what these kinds of truths are about and whether they require TMKs. Negative truths use the negation connective, 'it is not the

case that φ' , and can be understood in a similar, non-existence-entailing way. Thus, my strategy and proposal for addressing negative truths is just as non-radical as my strategy for understanding other TBRs, constructed out of such predicates, which are not existence-entailing. For TBRs that are not existence-entailing, such as negative truths, it would be unreasonable to require that they are made true by things that exist. That would be to misunderstand what they are about.

3.5.3 Objection 3: *Does My Understanding of TT Reject Everything the TT-ist Holds Dear?*

The third objection is that understanding TT in this piecemeal and *disunified* way rejects everything that TT-ists hold dear. The worry might be that my account is no longer a version of TT, if I allow that so many truths, all negative truths and even some positive truths, do not have TMKs.

My response is that a modest version of TT, which respects what we say and what we are talking about when using TBRs, is a more plausible version of TT, whose main aim is to elucidate and say true things about the relation between truths and reality. If it turns out that many truths do not have a relation to reality, and in fact, given what they say and are about, require there *not to be a relation with reality*, then the version of TT which identifies and captures this is a better version of TT than the alternatives, which claim that there is a relation when there is not. My version of TT identifies and can help us identify when there is indeed a relation between truths and reality, and modestly and correctly, refuses to claim that there is such a relation when there should not be. The way that my version does this is by telling us to look closely at what our TBRs are strictly and fully about. And, we are clearly still TT-ists, because we claim that there is a large subset of truths that require there to be TMKs for them to be true, even though there are many TBRs which do not require TMKs to make them true. Happily, we restrict the need for TMKs and reject Maximalism in a non-arbitrary way.

3.6 Conclusion

Finally, it should be clear that we are able to avoid positing any sort of ontologically repugnant things that must exist to make negative claims true. For it would be to misunderstand what these negative truths are about, to misunderstand the concept *intentional objects*, to think otherwise.

In conclusion, the version of TT, which respects and incorporates strict and full *aboutness*, can give us a strategy for addressing the problem of negative truths in a non-arbitrary, intuitive, and modest way.

Chapter 4

Some Ontological Modesty Concerning TMKs

4.1 Introduction: *SAC and Ontological Modesty Concerning TMKs*

In this chapter, I explain in what way SAC can give us an *ontologically modest* account of TMKs. The very viability of this account *challenges metaphysically substantial* accounts of TT, as it makes such metaphysical substantiality unnecessary for the purposes of TT. SAC demands that TT emphasise the *semantics of aboutness*. In §4.1.1, I say more about how this leads us to reject as extravagant the orthodox emphasis on the *metaphysics of necessitation* (or any other supposedly substantial *relation*). In §4.1.2, SAC's ontological modesty in more detail. And, in §4.2, I shall give an example of a debate, when properly understood, where this modesty is clearly exhibited. Specifically, linguistic evidence supports the claim that categorial distinctions can be drawn between states and events; however, I shall argue that the linguistic evidence does not support a distinction in kinds of *entities* but, at best, supports a distinction in *how things are with entities*.¹ It is the task of §§5–8 to make the kind of *metaphysical modesty* sketched in this chapter convincing in traditional debates associated with TT.

4.1.1 More on the Immodesty of T-NEC

As we have seen, according to SAC, the TMKs for truths that need them are just those things and how things are with those things that the best semantic account *says that they are about* (§2.4). Also, we have seen that SAC allows us to reject T-NEC (§2.9). I want to explain briefly why this has the consequence that we can remain *neutral* as to whether we should reify, or give *ontologically full accounts* of, such entities as states

¹In Appendix 5, I raise a potential, nominalist objection to my account. Despite its claim to ontological modesty, so the objection goes, SAC is still open to the charge of “word magic”. I argue that when we understand this charge properly, not only is my account immune to it, but it can help us see more clearly in what way my account is modest and in what way other accounts are immodest. However, what I present in this chapter is sufficient for getting a good grip of what metaphysical modesty consists in. The appendix merely brings added support and clarity.

of affairs (SOAs), objects, events, properties (construed either as universals, tropes, instantiations, or whatever), processes, and states. Normally, TT has been offered as an argument *for* the existence of entities such as SOAs, understood as *existent things* such as objects. Armstrong (1997: 113–9), for instance, offers what he calls the “truthmaker argument” for the existence of SOAs. As I explained in §1.7, these are not just objects, properties, the latter’s instantiation in the former, but these are thought to be structured complexes of objects, properties, and the property’s instantiation in the object.

This argument goes as follows. Consider

T10: Some triangles are equiangular.

The existence of some triangles does not guarantee that T10 is true, because there could be triangles without any of them being equiangular. The existence of equiangularity is also not enough to guarantee the truth of T10, as there could be equiangularity without any triangles being equiangular. The TT-ist then argues that there must be something that exists that *makes true* T10 (since it’s true), but what is it? What is often offered as an answer is the fact or SOA which is a structured, complex of objects (triangles) and equiangularity; it is the structured, complex SOA *some triangles being equiangular*. If such a complex entity exists, then the truth of T10 is guaranteed.

This TMK-argument relies on a metaphysically substantial assumption about T-REL. According to this assumption there must exist some *object* or *entity*, which by its very existence can *necessitate* the truth of T10, making T10 true in all possible worlds where T10 and the entity exist. This assumption is NEC. And accepting NEC introduces into our ontology not just objects and properties but structured, complex entities which must play the TMK-role. However, NEC is ontologically immodest not just in positing necessary connections for which we have no empirical basis (see §2.9). Claiming that T-REL is a form of NEC is also ontologically immodest because of the consequences it has for the kinds of things that must inhabit our ontology, specifically, that we seem to be forced into postulating SOAs. The postulation of SOAs seems to be based not on empirical data or metaphysical reasoning concerning, say, the possibility of instantiation. Rather, it is based purely on *a priori* reflection on a property (truth) of *linguistic* entities (TBRs) and the intuition, which (only) some of us have, that the relation between TBRs and reality must be metaphysically substantial. My claim is that SAC can give us a clear enough account of T-REL, even if we drop NEC. If there is no need to posit a metaphysically substantial relation, then modesty demands that we should not do so. Can SAC give us an ontologically more modest alternative to this NEC-story about TT?

4.1.2 SAC’s Ontological Modesty

With TBRs and the aboutness-apparatuses out of which they are constructed, we are able to *talk* and *think about* a great variety of entities and also a great variety of ways

that these entities can be. Given this, SAC demands not just that there is a *plurality of things* but a *plurality of ways* things are. However such a *plurality* is metaphysically innocuous. My reason for thinking this is best captured by Lewis when he explains that Bigelow's slogan "Truth is supervenient on being"² (Bigelow 1988: 132–33 and 158–159) should be understood, as Lewis says, as "constru[ing] 'being' broadly: it covers not only *whether* things are, but also *how* they are" (Lewis 1992: 218, see also 216). Similarly, Bigelow writes, "On this view [the second-order quantification view], the claim that there is a *somehow* that certain things are should not commit us to saying that there is some further *thing* which is this 'somehow' that they are. The second-order 'there is somehow ...' does not entail the first-order 'there is something ...'" (1988: 159). If we understand 'somehow' as relating to properties, Bigelow's point seems to be that to understand second-order quantification properly, we must understand that quantifying over properties (or *somehows*) does not mean that we are claiming that properties exist; to think otherwise is to conflate properties with *things* which are indeed claimed to exist when we use first-order quantification. Nothing about SAC requires us to *reify* the ways that things can exist and interpret such *ways of existing* as separate or further *things* or *entities* over and above the entities which are some way. Dodd makes the same point, in the context of considering the TBR the *ball is red at time t*, when he says,

For there would seem to be a possible world [where the TBR is false] which contains the same existents as the actual world but in which the ball in question is not red at *t*. The difference between these two worlds lies, not in what exists, but in *how things stand* with what exists. In the actual world the ball instantiates redness at *t*, in the imagined possible world it does not. Period. The truth of <The ball is red at *t*> is not, it seems, determined by the existence of some entity (*viz.* a state of affairs or trope [PAP]); it would seem to be true because some entity (*viz.* the ball) has the property in question at *t*. [2002a: 74]

What Lewis and Dodd are saying is that no *new or separate entity needs to exist* for the truth to be true. The difference between the world where the TBR 'the ball is red at time *t*' is true and the world where it is false, is *not a matter of what things exist*, but rather a matter of, as Dodd says, "*how things stand*" (*ibid.*) with what exists. Dodd's target

²I take it that this is just a variant of TD that truth is dependent on reality. Some think that supervenience is not *asymmetric*. See, for instance, Bennett and McLaughlin (2014: §3.2) who argue that supervenience is sometimes *symmetric* and sometimes *asymmetric*, so in general it's non-symmetric. In general, however, I think Bigelow and Lewis mean to understand the *supervenience* involved here as *asymmetric* or at least as *asymmetric* as T-REL needs to be (see my §1.2 and §1.3.3 for discussion of T-REL and TD's *general asymmetry* and the exceptions I mention). Also, see (Merricks 2007: §4), (Rodríguez-Pereyra 2005: 18–19) who argue that the supervenience thesis doesn't capture the TD-requirement that truth depends *asymmetrically* on being because truths *supervene symmetrically* on each other. Also, see (Horgan 1993: §8) who argues that supervenience cannot capture what is called *ontological dependence*. However, against Horgan, TD, as should be clear from my discussion, is neutral about whether the right *asymmetric* dependence is *ontological* or *non-ontological*. It is clearly not *ontological* if what is meant by '*ontological*' is that truths depend only on what exists rather than on *how* what truths are about exists. That my account rejects such an *ontological* reading of TD should be clear from the discussion in this section.

is TT-ists who think that TMKs must be *entities*. This target view forces the TT-ist to introduce complex *entities* composed out of objects and properties. SAC presents the TT-ist with a more modest option of understanding TMKs as entities and how things are with those entities, without introducing such complex entities.

SAC gives the TT-ist a way of embracing this insight from Dodd and Lewis.³ This comes down to what *the best semantic account of aboutness* says that TBRs are about and hence what *parts of reality* the account says are their TMKs. For instance, as I argued in §2.4.2.5, the best SEM-TAC does not require that there is a unique thing or entity that any particular TBR is *about*. Why then should we demand that the TBR is *about* some *unique* and *single* TMK: the SOA *the ball's being red at time t*? If we reject *unique aboutness* as I did there and embrace SAC, then it seems perfectly adequate and open to the TT-ist to say that the TMKs are the object *the ball* and *how things are with the ball at time t*, all of which are *how things are with the reality that the TBR is about*. There is no reason to *reify* *how things are* as a SOA or even as a PAP. Such a reification would be a step too far.

In fact, the *best semantic account of aboutness* might require only that we posit what Dodd calls “sub-sentential language/world relations” (2002a: 74 and 75)⁴ and their rela-
Whether or not it requires more is a question that is up for debate.⁵ Though the research

³Throughout my discussion of SAC I shall be following and siding with Dodd's insights here, and using them to make clear the consequences I think SAC has for TT, in particular in providing a *metaphysically modest* account of TT. However, I think that Dodd may be reading what Lewis says a bit charitably here. Yablo (1996) presents a sustained attack on semantic grounds against Lewis's modal realism, specifically his so-called “paraphrase argument” for our belief in the existence of possible worlds (modal realism). Lewis writes, “Ordinary language permits the paraphrase: there are many ways things could have been besides the way they actually are. On the face of it, this sentence [...] says that there exist many entities of a certain description, to wit ‘ways things could have been’ [...] I believe permissible paraphrases of what I believe; [...] I therefore believe in the existence of entities that might be called ‘ways things could have been’. I prefer to call them ‘possible worlds’” (Lewis 1973: 84). Yablo (ibid.: 259f, §4) makes a good case for explaining way-talk as how-talk; he expresses this later by saying things such as “‘How things are’ makes sense as the translation of ‘the way things are,’” (ibid.: 265) and “‘the way that such and such’ translates into ‘how such and such’” (ibid.: 266). As Yablo sees things, and this is what's most important for our purposes, part of the problem with Lewis's paraphrase argument for modal realism is that he seems to understand reference to *ways* as *objectual* or *entitative* quantification (ibid.: 267) over *ways*, allowing Lewis to see no issue with quantifying over worlds. Yablo explores the possibility of dropping the assumption that all quantifiers are *entitative* or *objectual* (ibid.: 267), with “nonobjectual quantifiers [being] not ontologically committal” (ibid.: 268). He opts for understanding apparent quantification over *ways* and *hows* as objectual quantification over the answers to *how questions*, instead of non-objectually (ibid.). I shall follow Yablo and speak as if ways and hows are indeed interchangeable and intertranslatable without losing or gaining any meaning or commitment, that is, not moving beyond what the *hows* commit us to. Thus, I shall assume that we can nonobjectually quantify over them in an ontologically non-committal way (the details of which I articulate as we go deeper into my discussion). But, in short, I think Yablo's analysis and criticism of Lewis is on the right track. Even though Lewis (1998: 30) criticises Armstrong's T-NEC and TT, his move to objectually and entitatively quantify over ways leads him not just to modal realism, but to embrace TT and to try to articulate his own, metaphysically substantial version of TT in Lewis (2001a) and (2003) in terms of counterparts (see fn. 9 below for more on Lewis's TT).

⁴Dodd also calls them “sub-sentential thought/world relations” (2007: 398).

⁵See for instance, (Dodd 2002a: 78–81) where he argues that given such *sub-sentential language/world relations* one need not posit *any entity* or “that there must exist *some thing*” (ibid.: 79) to account for any truths but rather that truth supervenes or depends on “*how things are*” (ibid.: 79). This

on this is still somewhat underdeveloped (as I pointed out in §2.3), it is most likely, as I shall try to explain in the rest of the section, that the best account does not require us to posit anything more than the things that one is talking about and for those things to be *how* they are described to be. As I pointed out in §1.2.2, a dependence on *how things really are* is not a dependence on the *existence* of some further entity *how things are*, but, rather, a dependence on the *being* or *reality* of how things are. This, it seems, does not require *more than* these sub-sentential language/world relations. It is important that this is emphasised. Read (2000) claims that “the Fox/Bigelow idea [is] that truth supervenes on how things are—that truthmakers entail that true propositions are true” (ibid.: 78). But, as Dodd points out when commenting on what Read says, “it should be obvious that the theses which Read treats as equivalent are, in fact, a harmless platitude and a controversial metaphysical thesis respectively” (Dodd 2002a: 74).⁶ Dodd’s point, as I shall read it in a spirit of non-skepticism,⁷ is that the claim that truth supervenes (or in my terms *depends*⁸) on *how* things are, should not be thought to entail or be *equivalent* to the claim that a TMK, such as a SOA, *entails* or *necessitates* that true TBRs are true. My claim is that TAAT clearly remains *neutral* as to whether some *unique* truthmaking *entity* such as a SOA needs to exist, and in fact allows the TT-ist a way out of thinking this. All it requires is that *whatever the TBR is about*, and let us call all those aspects of reality the TMKs (*truthmakers*; rather than *the truthmaker*), exist

is an important insight. Dodd is stating that given the existence of the *sub-sentential language/world relations* there is no need to posit a SOA (as Armstrong does) to account for the relevant truths.

⁶Again, I follow Dodd (2002a: 74–75) who makes a similar point about Parsons (1999)’s “truthmaker essentialism,” the thesis that “every truth has a truthmaker, *which is essentially that truth’s truthmaker*” (1999: 328) and what he calls the “truthmaker principle” that “every true sentence’s truth supervenes on the nature of some thing” (ibid.: 327). Talking in terms of ‘*essentially that truth’s truthmaker*’, in my mind, is akin to the *metaphysical move* that I hope that SAC avoids. Dodd points out that Parsons’s so-called “truthmaker principle” “fails to speak to the intuition driving philosophers such as Armstrong, Bigelow, and Simons [that] the existence of a truthmaker α *guarantees* that p [which is] what they mean by saying that α makes $\langle p \rangle$ true. What Parsons calls ‘truthmaker essentialism’ is central to the truthmaker principle itself” (Dodd 2002a: 75). I think that what Dodd says is completely right about Parsons. I think further, however, that Parsons’s talk about “the *nature of some thing*” which is part of Parsons’s so-called “platitudinous thesis” (ibid.), that is, his truthmaker principle, already brings in too many commitments to the nature of TMKs and what reality must be like to make true TBRs. Why claim that some *unique* thing with a specific nature and essence must exist to guarantee truths? SAC avoids such commitments. Also, Dodd is right that ‘truthmaker essentialism’ neither captures nor speaks to what Armstrong, Bigelow, Simons and the other TT-ists want. What I am doing is providing a re-reading of TT, which rejects all the *metaphysical baggage* of these previous TT-ists, while still capturing everything we would want out of an account that captures what the relation between truths and reality is. My account *explicitly* not just *fails to speak to* their intuitions (as Parsons’s account does, unintentionally), but *rejects many of those intuitions altogether*.

⁷Of course, I am well aware of the fact that Dodd is a TT-skeptic. So, it would perhaps be more correct, if I were propounding his actual views, to interpret Dodd as thinking that Read’s claim is platitudinous *because* talk of the *how things are* or the *way things are* is more or less equivalent to talk of truth. I explicitly do not want to engage directly with skeptical interpretations however. As I stated in §0.2, I am using skeptical *challenges* to try to build a more modest version of TT. So, with the assumption of non-skepticism, I shall read these challenges as challenges to immodesty. Further, I avoid TT-skepticism and this perhaps more correct skeptical reading of Dodd, in my assumption of the relations-come-easy view of relations (§1.4), on which there are relations underlying even equivalences.

⁸See fn. 2 (this chapter) on the issue of capturing the *dependence* in TD in terms of supervenience.

and are the way they are described and talked about. But the general point is that there is no *good reason* for TT to make metaphysical commitments *beyond* those stipulated by the best SEM-TAC, and it is exceedingly likely that, if there are any metaphysical commitments, they are *minimal* and *modest*.

Another way of summing up the metaphysical neutralism of TAAT and SAC is again clearly stated in Lewis (1992) and Dodd (2002a). Dodd writes,

As Lewis himself notes (1992: 218), it can only be an over-reaction to move from the thought that truths are about things to the truthmaker principle. Counterfactuals [and other TBRs] need grounds, but it remains obscure why they need ontological grounds in Armstrong's sense (Armstrong [1991: 190]). [Dodd 2002a: 77]

This, I think sums up the spirit of my proposal well. However, what Dodd and Lewis clearly mean by the 'truthmaker principle' is the claim that the TMKs must, by their very existence, *guarantee* or *necessitate* the truth of the TBRs.⁹ This is clearly what is meant by Armstrong, Bigelow, and others. But, as I hope to have pointed out, SAC can lead to an understanding of TT that is free from *strong metaphysical commitments*. All we need is that the entities that the TBRs are *about* exist and are *how* they are described to be, as long as the TBRs are TBRs which make positive claims about the way the world is. This claim is compatible with the various *strong metaphysical versions* of TT. But, importantly, it does not *entail* any of them. This is because it is completely compatible with accounts that say *nothing* about the *ontological* and *metaphysical* nature of what the TBRs are about. It is *far from obvious* that the *best* SEM-TAC has to say *anything* about the *ontological grounds* (in Armstrong's sense or any sense) of truths. For example, consider a claim such as T2: 'there are giraffes' or another claim such as 'the table is black'. SAC merely requires that giraffes, the entities that T2 is about, indeed exist, and it merely requires that what the second claim is *strictly and fully about*, what it says about *how* reality is, exists and is the way it is

⁹It is interesting to note that in Lewis (2001a and 2003), Lewis seems to adopt what he calls the 'truthmaker principle', accepting a version of T-NEC. In particular, in Lewis (2003), he seems to try to give a nominalist-friendly account of these *necessitating* TMKs for predicative truths without accepting Armstrong's SOAs, by using the notion of an object-*qua*-property. An object-*qua*-property is the modal perspective of that *object* and *all its counterparts* in worlds where the object and its counterparts have that property. Such objects-*qua*-property necessitate TBRs such as *that object has that property*. This is indeed ingenious, but if SAC is right, we can capture the truth platitudes that are part of BATT without even having to give such metaphysical grounds. In my view, what this, the fact that Lewis can provide such an ingenious nominalist-friendly account of *necessitating* TMKs, shows is that not even T-NEC requires us to take a full-blown *metaphysically full and substantial* view of the nature of TMKs. As the great variety of accounts of the nature of TMKs shows to me, the TMK principle, as envisioned by T-NEC-ists, does not entail the existence of either SOAs, PAPs, Lewis's objects-*qua*-property, or any other specific metaphysically substantial account of TMKs. Even if in one set of worlds it is the case that SOAs exist and that no non-transferable PAPs exist, it is possible that some TBR which is made true by some SOAs in those worlds is made true by non-transferable PAPs in other worlds, where there are no SOAs but where there are, instead, PAPs. It is perfectly conceivable to me that one world is a world of SOAs while other worlds are worlds of non-transferable PAPs. If that's true, I do not see how any of these ontologies are entailed by the truth of any TBR. I apply this kind of argument again below.

described to be. For either of these claims to be true, if SAC is adequate for TT, there is no need to say anything more about the *nature of giraffes*, *the nature of tables*, or *the nature of blackness*, and there is definitely no need to require the existence of some unique, metaphysically substantial, but also, to many, *mysterious*, entity, the SOA *the table's being black*.

Here's another argument for the claim that SAC is metaphysically much more modest than these stronger metaphysical versions of TT. SAC is compatible with the metaphysical worldviews such versions espouse without entailing any of them and hence without favouring any of them. Let us conceive of some possible worlds w_m , w_{m+1} , to w_n where there are only SOAs in those worlds and also conceive of other possible worlds w_{n+1} to w_p where there are only PAPs. I can clearly and distinctly conceive of each world. When Jonny says, "I think. I exist.", both of these TBRs are true if Jonny and his counterparts utter them in worlds w_m to w_p . In these cases, because there is nothing in those worlds but SOAs and PAPs, their TMKs will be either of these. But, what they are about is exactly the same in those worlds: the first TBR is about Jonny and how things are with Jonny, that is, that he's thinking; the second TBR is about Jonny and his existing. Whatever the deep story of the ontological nature or category of the TMKs in the different worlds, the TMKs are the same-qua-TMKs-for-these-TBRs. In worlds w_m to w_n the TMKs happen to be SOAs and in worlds w_{n+1} to w_p the TMKs happen to be PAPs. Nothing about the truth of the TBRs nor SAC entails that TMKs can only be one or the other or that they must be either. Such neutrality is at the heart of metaphysical modesty. So, SAC is *metaphysically modest* in ways that other accounts are not.

I have not argued that SOAs do not exist. One may argue *for* or *against* the existence of SOAs (or PAPs) on independent grounds. But, that is not my concern. I have merely argued that SOAs and PAPs are not necessary for truth. I have objected against the TMK-argument *for* their existence. According to my modest view, the TMKs are just whatever the TBRs are *strictly* and *fully* about. Thus, unless a commitment to such metaphysical matters is essential to the best SEM-TAC—and in no way does this seem to be the case—one can remain *neutral* as to whether TMKs are SOAs or PAPs or whatever else of metaphysical substance.

4.2 An Illustration of the Importance of Getting Right What We Are Talking About: *States vs Events*

The aim of this section is to provide an illustration of metaphysical modesty and aboutness in action, highlighting the importance of the right, modest semantic views of what TBRs are about. I argue, in particular, that semantic differences between TBRs used to talk about states and events can mark differences of *category* between states and events, but that to draw *ontological* conclusions about *what there is*, on this basis, is metaphysically extravagant.

To do this, I shall present and discuss two arguments that have been used to argue for a categorial distinction between states and events on the basis of the semantic features of TBRs used to talk about them. Both arguments are meant to lay out the distinction between them by marking out the differences in *how they fill time*. The arguments require us to take a closer look at the phenomena of verb aspect and the semantics of aspect generally. By looking at the aspect of the verbs that characterise the different phenomena, one is able to mark out the differences in the *temporal shape* between states and events.¹⁰ By looking at this difference, I shall illustrate how merely looking at the semantic aspects of the TBRs can help us identify important features that events possess and states lack. Further, the presence of these features has been used by philosophers to support the view that events meet, and states fail to meet, what are called the requirements of particularity.¹¹ However, I shall not focus my discussion on this.¹² Instead, because the particularity argument hinges on evidence to do with *nominalisation* and the fact that events are meant to be *countable* in a particular way, while states are *not countable*, I shall critically evaluate *these* features of the argument. I shall indicate that one should understand the syntactic and semantic features as marking a difference in what we are talking *about*: states versus events. However, I shall argue that the evidence is inconclusive as to whether the categorial difference in what we are talking about marks a categorial difference in *ontology* with regard to the kinds of *entities* there are. The crucial point is that there is no semantic reason to indicate that there is a difference in *what there is* rather than merely a difference in *how things are*.

From the differences in syntactical and semantic categorisations which I shall present in what follows, Marcus (2009) and Steward (1997)¹³ both draw the conclusion that these are not “just a by-product of grammar” (Steward *ibid.*: 95) but that there are corresponding distinctions in categorial *ontology*.¹⁴ In particular, their central argumentative move is to point out that *one must not change the subject matter* when talking about states by slipping into talking about events. In other words, to get their *ontological* argument off the ground, they rely on our *intuitions* about what the syntactic and semantic features of TBRs tell us about what the TBRs we use are *about*.

¹⁰Comrie (1976: 2–6) helpfully discusses how aspect and tense are “concerned with time in very different ways” (*ibid.*: 5). Tense is a *deictic* category, locating situations in time, usually with reference to the present. Aspect concerns “the internal temporal constituency of the one situation” (*ibid.*). The differences in *temporal shape* of states and events are differences in their *internal* temporal constituency.

¹¹This kind of argumentative strategy is articulated by Galton (1984), Marcus (2009: 216–218), Mourelatos (1978), Parsons (1990: §3), and Steward (1997: 35–40, 115). I shall argue that they, and especially Marcus, must be careful not to overblow the *metaphysical significance* of their conclusions.

¹²My MPhil dissertation, (Schipper 2009), of which the following discussion is an adaptation, explored the consequences for particularity in depth. That is not my intended focus here.

¹³They do not stand alone; in a canonical paper, Gendler-Szabo (2004: §1) argues that “how the recognition that progressive sentences do not entail their perfective correlates made it clear that such a semantic analysis must presuppose a richer ontology than that of classical tense logic” (*ibid.*: 31). This is the “imperfective paradox,” which I discuss below. Gendler-Szabo uses it to enrich his ontology; merely quantifying over possible worlds or events, as he argues (*ibid.*: §2), is not satisfactory.

¹⁴Steward thinks that denying this would be “unduly dismissive of the importance of grammatical distinctions for ontology” (*ibid.*).

In what follows, I argue that their moves rest on an unwarranted understanding of TT. All that TT requires, if we accept SAC, rather than T-NEC and other metaphysically substantial accounts of TT, is that there is a difference in *how things are* and not a difference in *what things there are*. For instance, consider the state *John's being happy* and the event *John's crossing the street*. Neither the *state* nor the *event* involving John exist. The thing that exists in these cases is *John*. The states and events are just how things are with John (and perhaps other things too, such as the street, since John is crossing *the street*); in the former, he is happy; in the latter, he is doing something, that is, crossing the street. Of course, TBRs which are not strictly and fully about the same thing require differences in *reality* to make them true. Steward and Marcus are clearly right that the syntax and semantics mark a difference in what the TBRs are *about*, but this difference can be understood as a difference in *being* in the sense that there is a difference in *how things are*, rather than in *what there is*. To make this further step would be to accept NEC, which is, as I have argued, neither necessary nor sufficient for TT (§2.8–2.9).

4.2.1 The Argument from Aspectual Markers

Mourelatos (1978: 418–419), in an attempt to update Kenny (1963: §8), who emphasises the presence of the continuous tense of verbs to event-predication, emphasises the consequences this has for the phenomenon of temporal shape of events.¹⁵ In the case of English sentences, the continuous tense of verbs is what Steward calls an “aspectual marker” (Steward 1997: 84), a grammatical or syntactic feature which marks out what kind of aspect the predication has. Specifically, the *presence* of the continuous form indicates that the aspect of the predication is *imperfective* (or what is also called *progressive*).¹⁶ And, the *absence* of the continuous form indicates a *perfective* aspect. Some TBRs exhibit a proper distinction between perfective and imperfective verb-aspect; others do not. It has been suggested that the presence of this distinction reveals something important about how the entities that these TBRs are about *fill time* (Steward 1997: 77), that is, have a distinct *temporal shape* (ibid.: 97–101; Marcus 2009: 218–221). One part of the distinction is that a verb-predicate with perfective aspect has a sense of completion, while a verb-predicate with imperfective aspect does not. Consider:

T18: Margot told me something.

T19: Margot was telling me something.

Both are perfectly good TBR-constructions that make sense. However, there is a crucial difference between their syntactic structure. In T18, the verb-predicate is not in the continuous form and thereby has what is commonly called a “perfective aspect.” In T19, the verb-predicate is in the continuous form and thereby has an *imperfective* aspect.

¹⁵My terminology and usage are standard. See Steward (1997).

¹⁶See (Gendler-Szabo 2004) on the relation between the progressive and the imperfective.

Moreover, the indicated event in T18 can be *viewed or considered as a whole* in its entirety from our perspective in the present. T18 indicates completion: that is, there was a telling that has finished. By contrast, T19 indicates that something was in the process of happening: the telling was on-going but may have been interrupted or stopped before being completed. And because of this, T19 does not entail T18.¹⁷

Both T18 and T19 are sentences about events.¹⁸ This is indicated by the use of the event-verb 'to tell'. When we consider other event-verbs, such as 'to walk', 'to show', 'to fill', we can easily construct TBRs where the verbs are in either the perfect or imperfect tense: 'Joe walked across the street' or 'Joe was walking across the street'; and 'James showed me the way' or 'James was showing me the way'; and 'Jane filled the cup' or 'Jane was filling the cup'. All this seems to indicate that the perfective/imperfective distinction arises in the case of events, and that they are thereby the kinds of things that can begin and finish, or remain unfinished. These are the features of the temporal shape of events and show how they fill time.

By contrast to how things are with events, when we look at states, and the corresponding TBRs about states, the perfective/imperfective distinction does not arise. Consider parallel TBRs in the case of states:

T20: Ed believed that Corbyn is a socialist.

T21: Ed was believing that Corbyn is a socialist.¹⁹

In this case, despite its oddity, T21 entails T20. Whenever T21 is true, T20 is true. Whenever anyone *S* was believing *X*, then *S* also believed that *X*.²⁰ TBRs in the continu-

¹⁷Gendler-Szabo (2004: 32) calls this the imperfective paradox.

¹⁸Some might argue that TBRs such as T19 do not pick out an event, but rather something of a completely different category, namely a process, or following the Vendler-Kenny categories (see [Vendler 1957: 148ff] and [Kenny 1963: §8]), an activity. Whether T19 picks out events or processes, the point is that the temporal shape of *events* are a particular way, and this is highlighted here in the distinction between the perfect and imperfect aspects that are available to verbs such as 'to tell'. The verb 'to tell' is indeed used to pick out both events and processes, but it is clear when we are using the verb to pick out an on-going, and perhaps yet incomplete, process rather than a completed event. In §4.2.1.1, I discuss complications this raises for the overall distinction between states and events, making clearer the distinction between processes and events too. I think that it is important to assume that there is no categorial difference between events and processes, for the sake of clarity, and specifically to make clear the semantic distinction between state- and event-verbs. For otherwise the distinction between states and events based on the imperfective paradox, which the philosophers I discuss make, loses its plausibility altogether. Just to take an example, Parsons (1985: 21) explicitly ignores the process-event distinction in his discussion of states versus events, arguing only later that processes should be analysable in terms of events (ibid.: §9). So, I'll mainly just talk about TBRs such as T19 as if they pick out and are about processes understood also as events. But, as I shall point out later, it is probably best *not* to consider processes to be events, but rather as sometimes parts of events.

¹⁹I want to note that, in the example Marcus (2009: 219) uses, he talks about *belief*, which is clearly a mental *state*. However, I think the argument he provides, which is similar to mine, will have difficulties running the same reasoning on other mental states such as *hoping* and *fearing*. For instance, 'Ed was *fearing* that Corbyn is a socialist' behaves differently from T21. I consider this kind of case briefly below and I think the general *aboutness* point, which I shall make clear, helps to explain what is going on in these cases.

²⁰Talking about degrees of belief wouldn't make the entailment invalid and wouldn't make these two come apart. There is no sense in which someone can be believing something to degree *X* and not believe it to degree *X*.

ous form such as T21, when they contain stative-verbs do not have the same implications as sentences such as T19, which contain event-verbs. While T18 and T19 are distinct in the way they capture the different temporal aspects of events, the different grammatical constructions of T20 and T21 do not capture any differences in the temporal aspects of states. It seems, then, that the perfective/imperfective distinction does not arise with state-TBRs.

One way to understand what is going on with the syntactic and semantic features of such expressions is that they indicate important differences in the way states and events, as *categorially distinct entities*, themselves fill time. This is the way favoured by Marcus (2009: 219–222).²¹ On his understanding, an event is the kind of *entity* that has temporal parts, as it is not wholly present in each of its time intervals. Also, an event clearly begins and ends, meaning that there is a clear sense in which an event can be said to start to occur, be in a process of occurring, and then finish or come to completion. Unlike events, it does not seem as if states are the kinds of entities that have temporal parts, since they seem to be wholly present at each interval, a feature commonly called *homogeneity*,²² and because of this, they do not have a beginning or an end.

Here is a potential counterexample. Consider a vase that is sitting on a table. This, if anything, is a state of the table and the vase. One might naturally think that such a state does have a beginning (and an end) in the sense that it begins when the vase is placed on the table and ends when it is taken off the table. Further, it is on this basis that we can make a distinction between the state and the objects of which it is a state, that is, the objects which are involved in the *state* as *its* objects. In this case, the objects are the vase and the table. They are distinct from the state, for they do not begin and end with the state. So, the state and the objects must be distinct.

However, although states seem to have a beginning and end in this sense, this is not the relevant sense of ‘*beginning*’ and ‘*end*’. Instead, the idea that generates the distinction is that the state *the vase’s sitting on the table* is something that does not have a beginning or an end in the sense of having a *start* and having a *point of completion* because it is *wholly present* at each interval that it obtains.

The beginning and end that is involved with states, in this sense, is different from that involved with events. Events begin at some time interval, and, unlike states, are not wholly present in any later interval until its *end*, in the sense of *completion*, is reached. States constitute a different *mode of being*, because they are said to be wholly present at each interval and do not have to reach any *end*, in the sense of *completion*, to do so. Both the states that Ed and the vase are in are states that Ed and the vase are in *wholly* (and not in some incomplete sense), at each moment that Ed is believing what he does and the vase is sitting on the table. By contrast, if Ed crossed the street, he will not

²¹However, as I shall indicate at the end of this section, there is another, more modest way of understanding what is going on with the syntactic and semantic features of such expressions

²²This is the common name for this feature especially in the linguistics literature; see (Galton 2006: 5) for a discussion of processes as homogeneous and events as lacking homogeneity in this sense.

have crossed the street at every moment in which he is crossing the street. Only when he reaches the end will he have crossed the street. Thus, the event requires completion. And since the end of a state does not require or involve completion, states and events end in a different manner.²³

To make this distinction clearer let us now consider how states and events differ in the way that they fill time during *specific intervals*. Let us say Ed believed that Corbyn is a socialist, throughout some time-interval *i*.²⁴ There does not seem to be any other correct description than that at any time during *i*, it will be true that Ed believed what he did. Events work differently. Let's say that Margot told me that Jeremy came to the store yesterday during some time interval *i*₂. It would not be true until the end of *i*₂ that she told me what she did. Before the end of *i*₂, Margot will have been in the process of telling me that Jeremy came to the store yesterday, but she will not yet have completed telling me this until the end of *i*₂. Only when she completes this process of telling at the end of *i*₂ will she have told me that Jeremy came to the store yesterday. Although the specific event of Margot telling me something may be divided into phases, these different phases would not be the same type of events as the original, completed event. At different intervals within *i*₂, Margot will be in the process of telling me what she will have told me by the end of *i*₂. But each of these intervals contain, as a whole, other completed events, such as Margot's saying the word 'Jeremy' or the word 'came'. These are other events which happen also to be phases which constitute the process of Margot's telling me that Jeremy came to the store yesterday. But, only at *i*₂ will she have completed this longer event.

One way to describe the distinction between events and states in terms of the way that they each fill time is that *events take time*, while *states persist through a time*.²⁵ Galton (1984: 24) explains that this shows that states are what he calls "dissective", which means that "any stretch of time in which a particular state obtains can be broken

²³I shall discuss potential counterexamples to this point at the end of this section.

²⁴I think that this is compatible with *i* being so short that it is instantaneous. I do not see a problem with instantaneous beliefs.

²⁵Cresswell (1986: 371–375; *passim*), using the notion of a sub-interval, makes a similar point in drawing his distinction between objects and states on the one hand and events on the other. He, however, attributes the difference to the fact that state and object TBRs have what he calls "subinterval" properties, which means that if the TBR is true at interval *i*, then it is true at every subinterval of *i*. This amounts to the same point as I am making. However, he draws the further conclusion that 'exists' applies to entities which have the subinterval property, and 'occurs,' rather than 'exists,' applies to entities which lack the property. In effect, states and objects exist, while events occur. One can understand predicates such as 'exists' in the case of objects, 'obtains' in the case of states, and 'occurs' in the case of events, all as what Moltmann (2010: §1) calls 'existence predicates'. She argues that the right account of existence predicates in natural language, and especially in English, reveals a notion of existence that divides into at least three different *modes of being*, reflecting the three existence predicates: "*exist*, *occur* (or related predicates such as *happen* or *take place*), and *obtain*" (ibid.: 1–2). This is one way of talking about these *modes of being*. I am more sympathetic to Cresswell, who keeps a distinction between these so-called "existence-predicates". As I pointed out in §1.2.2, *modes of being* are not all entities. Considering 'obtains' and 'occurs', which are verbs describing other *modes of being*, to be *existence-predicates*, carries with it the assumption that these other *modes of being* are entities. This assumption, as I shall argue, is problematic.

down into sub-stretches in each of which that state obtains” (ibid.: 24). By contrast, as Galton (ibid.) explains, events are “unitary”, which means that “even though a particular occurrence of some event may be divided into phases, these phases are not of the same type as the original event” (ibid.).²⁶ This distinction between states and events highlights the reasons why we can say that T21 does entail T20, and why T19 does not entail T18. Specifically, it is right to say that ‘Ed was believing that Corbyn is a socialist’ implies ‘Ed believed that Corbyn is a socialist’, because there isn’t a way of subdividing the intervals in which a state obtains such that it does not obtain in each of the subintervals. Changing the tense (or forcing a change in tense) of the state-TBRs does not capture any difference in the temporal aspects of the state nor in regard to how the state relates to time.

4.2.1.1 **Objection 1: *Counterexamples Concerning Unspecified Event Descriptions: Processes vs Events***

The distinction made between states and events so far is clear enough. However, let’s consider some counterexamples.

First, consider what looks like a pair of event ascriptions: ‘the ball expanded’ and ‘the ball was expanding’. Nothing can be in the process of expanding without having expanded at least a tiny bit. So, it seems to me that ‘the ball was expanding’ entails ‘the ball expanded’, even if the expansion was only tiny. The TBR ‘the ball was expanding’ has a different meaning from the TBRs ‘the ball was preparing to expand’ or ‘the ball was about to expand’, neither of which entail ‘the ball expanded’.

Second, consider what we might call short-term, or processual, event descriptions such as ‘the ball is moving’. Whenever the ball is moving or has started moving, the ball will have moved too. So, there is a similar entailment between ‘the ball is moving’ and ‘the ball moved’. In these cases, the event-verbs ‘to expand’ and ‘to move’ seem to behave like state-verbs, at least if the entailment from the imperfective to the perfective aspect is characteristic of state-verbs. Further, in neither case must there have been any time between the starting of the expanding, or moving, and the completion of the expanding, or moving, for the ball to have expanded, or moved. Merely by expanding, or moving, will the ball have completed *some* expansion, or movement. The ball will have expanded, or moved, at every moment in which it is expanding, or moving. Thus, some events, like states, will be wholly present at every moment in which it is occurring. These examples seem to collapse the distinction between states and events, at least in the way I marked the distinction above.

To understand these counterexamples properly, we need to consider the distinction between processes, events,²⁷ and states. First, the TBRs ‘the ball is expanding’ and

²⁶Marcus (2009: 218–219) emphasises this way of drawing the distinction.

²⁷Galton (2006: 5) emphasises the significance of the distinction between events and processes. I briefly mentioned this distinction in fn. 18 above.

'the ball is moving' are indeed event-descriptions since they use event-verbs. However, they do not describe fully-formed events, but, rather, on-going, perhaps yet incomplete, processes.²⁸ As I explained a few paragraphs ago, these on-going processes are constituted by events. That is in part why descriptions of the processes entail descriptions of these events. However, these process-constituting events are what we might call *phases of a larger event*, the *completion* of which is marked by the *end of some more specific process*. The unspecified 'the ball was moving' entails the unspecified 'the ball moved', but the more specific 'the ball was moving from one end of the pitch to the other' does not entail 'the ball moved from one end of the pitch to the other'.²⁹ What I think this discussion points to is a further distinction within the category of events. Unspecified processual event-descriptions might entail unspecified events, as 'the ball was moving' entails 'the ball moved, at least somewhat'. But, the kinds of event-descriptions, which the philosophers I am discussing seem to be solely concerned with, are just *specified* event-descriptions. There is, then, a clear distinction between state-descriptions and such event-descriptions in terms of whether or not descriptions with imperfective aspect entail descriptions with perfective aspect. However, as the counterexamples presented here illustrate, one can make a distinction on the same grounds between unspecified and specified event-descriptions, and, hence, within the category of event itself.

However, these distinctions are marked at the level of *descriptions*, not at the level of *entities*. These features of event-descriptions, as yet, do not have *conclusive* consequences for an *ontology* of events—as *entities* distinct from other entities such as objects. Some philosophers think that events are coarse-grained *entities*; see for example Quine (1985: 167f), who individuates events according to spatiotemporal coextensiveness,³⁰ and Davidson (1969: 179f), who individuates them according to their causal role. They would need to explain how an unspecified event, for instance the ball's having moved, and a specified event, the ball's having moved from one end of the pitch to the other, can be the same *entity*, despite the differences in event-descriptions that I have pointed out here. This, however, cannot be decided or explained at the level of description, but would need to be explained at the level of metaphysics and would include considerations to do with causation and spatiotemporal identity. So, drawing the conclusion that there is a distinction in kinds of *entity*, based solely on the linguistic distinctions presented, is premature at best. A fine-grained event theorist, such as Kim

²⁸Aristotle (1984a: *Metaphysics* IX.6) distinguishes between activities that are engaged in for their own sake, and activities that are directed at some end. Aristotle's test for distinguishing between these two is to ask, "At any time during a period in which someone is Xing, is it also true that they have Xed?" (see [Gill 1993: 365], [Graham 1980: 117–130], [Lear 1988: 105], and [Parsons 1990: 183]). Thus, the distinction between the processes and events in the examples I am discussing here goes as far back as Aristotle. See (Gill 1993) for an extended argument for why this distinction shouldn't be thought of as a *metaphysical distinction*.

²⁹See the previous footnote on Aristotle for another way of understanding the unspecified/specified distinction in terms of engaged-in-for-its-own-sake vs directed-at-some-end.

³⁰ See also Lemmon (1967: 98–99).

(1966: 321ff; and 1976: 34ff),³¹ will have to explain in what sense some unspecified event and some specified event, despite being distinct *entities* (on their account), are both the same *kind of entity*, despite the differences, which I have discussed, that occur in their descriptions. This will most likely involve a story about the nature of the properties associated with events, rather than further data to do with event-predications.³² In fact, this metaphysical story will have to be convincing *despite* the linguistic data presented.

My pluralism and neutralism, by contrast, allows me to take these descriptions to mark merely *linguistic* or *semantic* distinctions (or at least to leave this option open), rather than *ontological* distinctions as the philosophers I have just mentioned take them to be. This, in turn, lets me avoid having to consider the difficult (and to some, unsolvable) *ontological* issues to do with event individuation and identity.³³ One can be pluralist about *the various ways that the ball is, was, and can be* without having to take any of these ways as *entities* in their own right. Although this pluralism indicates that these are differences in *reality*,³⁴ the linguistic evidence doesn't seem to mark a difference in ontology, that is, in the kinds of *entities* there are. Thus, there is no need to distinguish such *ways of being* from *the ball* (as object) and from other *ways the ball is*, at least not in terms of distinctions in *ontological*, rather than *linguistic*, categories.

4.2.1.2 Objection 2: *Can States be in the Process of Finishing?*

Now I want to discuss another objection, which is most relevant to our purposes and reveals an important part of a successful TAAT-strategy, to what I have said so far and which engages with the examples used to make the distinctions. The objection is that it seems that we can, very well and meaningfully, understand T21 in such a way that it contains reference to a state which is in the process of finishing.

However, taking the phrase 'was believing' to indicate that the state is in the process of finishing and taking 'believed' to indicate a finishing of belief, such that T21 does not entail T20, will actually change what we are talking about, and uses the term 'belief' in a different way than if we would take it to refer to a state.³⁵ One may sensibly talk about someone *having believed* something. But this is consistent with the use of 'beliefs' to talk *about* states. It does not involve anything having finished doing anything or completing anything since a belief-state is not the kind of thing that finishes or comes

³¹Kim considers events to be property-exemplifications.

³²Kim (1976: 33), for instance, briefly explores the idea that events are changes and states are "unchanges" (ibid.). Taking this suggestion on board, one might try to develop a theory of static-properties and change-properties to metaphysically underpin the distinction. Kim (ibid.) quickly gives up on this idea however, given the fact that there are many hard cases for classification, such as *having a throbbing pain in the right elbow*. See also (Steward 1997: 72–74).

³³Gill (1993), for instance, also criticises Mourelatos and argues that "the differences between processes and events [on the basis of linguistic issues] cannot provide the basis for an ontological subcategorization of occurrences" (ibid.: 366).

³⁴More on this later, especially in §7, though, the notion of reality, or being, that I am working with was already introduced §1.2.2.

³⁵The stative-use of 'belief' is the ordinary English usage of such words. See Marcus (2009: 216).

to completion. Margot will not have finished or completed her believing at any point of her having the belief. Once she believes something, she continues to believe it until she changes her beliefs.³⁶ The fact that we can interpret the stative verb-phrases in such a way as to indicate that the belief actually finishes merely indicates that we can use these *phrases* in a different way than the ordinary way in which we use them, that is, to talk about states, which do not finish in the relevant sense. If we adopt this other interpretation and take the verb-predications to tell us something different about the way these entities fill time, what we're doing is changing talk *about* states to talk *about* something else, and in this case, events. When we say that Ed *has believed* that Corbyn is a socialist, to indicate that he believed and *has finished believing* this, *we are not talking anymore about the state of belief* that Ed was in, but rather *about something else*, an event in his mental life, such as perhaps the interval in which there was *a change in belief*. This does not show that *believing* is an event rather than a state, but rather that we can use stative-terms such as 'believing' to conform to talk *about* events.³⁷

Marcus (2009: 29) aptly describes this move as "changing the subject" (ibid.). It seems then that 'believing', taken as a stative-verb has characteristics importantly different from others that are event-verbs. The distinction between perfective and imperfective verb-aspect holds in the case of event-predication but not in state-predication. So, states do not fill time in the same way that events do. In a discussion of states, if one were to start using the grammatical behaviour which indicates that one is talking about events, what one is clearly doing is just changing the subject. But what is the significance of this?

4.2.1.3 Don't Change the Subject Matter!

Marcus (2009: 216) suggests that using 'belief' and other such nouns such as 'depression' or 'desire' to talk about *states* is the ordinary English usage of such words. I agree with this, but as I shall discuss in this and the next section, Marcus thinks that one can draw ontological conclusions from the categorial distinctions that we made in the preceding sections and from the fact that state-and-event talk is entrenched in ordinary usage.

I do not think that the ordinary usage of these words should have any direct bearing on ontological conclusions about whether the category of *state* is fundamental or not. In particular, even though it is true that such terms are used to talk *about* states in the way set out, and that states have the features identified in the discussion, it is not clear yet that a distinction is being made in terms of *ontological* category, that is, a distinction in *kinds of entity*. The different features of the event-verbs and state-verbs

³⁶Of course, neither her having this belief nor her changing her beliefs need be conscious. Much like other things we hold dear as important parts of ourselves, such as one's weight, one can gain and shed beliefs without being aware of what's happening to one's (implicit) worldview.

³⁷Conversely, the distinction between unspecified and specified events that I introduced in the previous section, perhaps, marks a way to use what are normally thought of as event-verbs *to talk about states*.

indicate a difference in what we can talk about. But, this may not be any more than a difference in “how things stand with what exists” (Dodd 2002a: 74).

Marcus’s point about entrenchment indicates that we use such terms to refer to *states* ordinarily. The move made above of forcing belief-talk to follow the logic of event-talk amounts to changing the subject. To use terms such as ‘belief’ to refer to events would be to use them to talk *about* something different than, though perhaps also similar to, what we normally talk about. Marcus writes, “changing the subject amounts to changing the semantics of belief-talk so as to make it conform to the model of event-talk. But this doesn’t show that beliefs are events, only that we can use the term ‘belief’ to pick out events” (2009: 219).³⁸ This is an important point. One must make sure not to change the subject and not change the semantics and logic of the subject matter. This is at the heart of my insistence that *aboutness* and knowing what we are talking about is central to the right theory of what makes TBRs true. When we use TBRs *about* states and when we use TBRs *about* events, there is an important difference in how the world is that makes true these different TBRs with categorially different semantic features.

4.2.1.4 Changing the Subject is Not Talking About a Different Entity

However, it is a large jump from thinking that we are talking *about* states and events understood as the intentional objects³⁹ that we are talking *about* when we use certain state-verbs and event-verbs in a TBR to thinking that the TBR as a whole refers to or is about an existing entity, the state or event. What is important is that we can still talk *about how things are with what exists* without committing ourselves to the existence of *how things are with what exists*. As is indicated by the discussion so far, we can even distinguish between different ways that *how things are with what exists* can fill time. States seem to persist through time, while events take time. However, this may also just be a way describing and talking about how things are with the subject. When Ed believed that Corbyn is a socialist throughout time interval *i*, he will have believed this throughout every subinterval of time within *i*. We can talk about this feature of the subject. And, indeed, this feature concerning him is different from the subject itself or its existing. We are talking about *how he existed*, not just about him or that he exists. However, this does not mean that there is a *state of him*, understood as a separate entity, existing throughout this period which has these features throughout this period. Ed and how things are with him is all that the *best semantic account of what* T20 and T21 *are about* requires in terms of TMKs for these TBRs. Similarly, in the case of event-talk, T18 and T19 merely require the intentional worldly satisfaction of T18 and T19 for them to be true. And all this requires is that Margot exists and for things concerning Margot to be how they are described to be. This means that Margot’s telling me something is

³⁸Marcus doesn’t seem to have anyone in particular in mind here when he makes this point, except perhaps the hypothetical theorist who might try to put belief talk into event talk.

³⁹Recall my discussion in §2.6, I am understanding ‘intentional object’ in the Cranean sense.

indeed importantly different from Margot having told me something because *how things are with Margot* is different in each case. The latter entails that she told me what she was telling me, while the former does not. This is because, unfortunately, Margot might not finish telling me what she is telling me (for instance, because of a tragic accident where she is hit by a car while she is speaking or because of something trivial such as her changing the subject mid-sentence, hence not completing what she was trying to say).⁴⁰

These semantic and syntactic differences and the consequences they have for the categorisation of *how things can be* for someone or something, and also for the general linguistic categorisations we can make about event- and state-verbs, is indeed very important. I think that the best way to understand them is as a difference in TMKs and truthmaking. However, this does not require us to go the step further and claim that there are consequences for *ontological categories* pertaining to *what exists*. This would only be warranted by the kind of T-NEC move that also reified SOAs, a move that Lewis calls an “over-reaction to something right and important and under-appreciated. What’s right, roughly speaking, is that truths must have *things* as their subject matter.” (1992: 218). However, even Lewis, it seems to me, misspeaks. Truths not only have *things* as their subject matter, but also *how things are with those things*. And this latter must not be thought of as an additional thing.

Marcus is right to think that we’re changing the subject matter when we’re analysing state-verbs (such as ‘believes’) with an event-semantics. But to think that states and events must exist as the TMKs for such truths, is an unwarranted over-reaction most likely spurred on by an acceptance of the wrong kind of TT. At best, the *metaphysical status* of the different categories that we’re talking about is left underdetermined by the semantics.

Of course, perhaps there are further features of the semantics that have been left out of our discussion. But when considering the aspectual shape alone and what reality must be like for these TBRs to be true, at best the *metaphysical status* of the things we are talking about is left undetermined *by the commitments of the world being the way it is talked about in the TBRs*. This is also perfectly consistent with the truth of the TBRs depending on reality, and not the other way around (preserving asymmetric dependence). My version of TT will have the consequence that there is some worldly difference concerning the TMKs of state- and event-talk, but the difference is much less metaphysically weighty than other theorists extravagantly claim them to be. Importantly, what TAAT-SAC allows us to do is to remain neutral as to whether the semantic differences that are clearly marked out by the semantic features of certain verbs (and we might extend this point to other expressions as well) has any consequences for what things exist, that is, metaphysical/ontological consequences.⁴¹ It seems that the se-

⁴⁰It has been suggested to me that this is perhaps a Quinean point.

⁴¹Marcus for instance makes a further distinction between states and events based on further linguistic evidence from (Galton 1984: 24). However, even Galton (ibid.), many of whose points about verb-

mantic features do mark out a difference in *how things are*. States and events seem to constitute, at the very least, different kinds of *ways things can be*.⁴² However, there is no reason, at least on linguistic grounds (and if Dodd [1999] is right, for many other grounds as well) to think of them as anything more substantial, such as SOAs.

4.2.2 The Argument from Countability & Nominalisation

A final feature of the semantics and syntax that I want to consider concerns the semantics of nominalisation. This is meant to mark out an ontological contrast between events and states, which is supposed to reveal a difference in *countability*. This contrast is drawn by Marcus (2009: 227) and Steward (1997: 89). They take the contrast from Mourelatos, who introduced the concept of a “nominalization transcription” (1978: 426) to try to argue that the distinction between mass- and count-nouns runs deeper than just the role it can play in categorising *predications*.⁴³ Consider for example the TBR:

T22: Margot walks to Russell Square.

The use of the verb in T22 indicates an event rather than a state. T22 can be standardly nominalised as:

T23: There is a walking to Russell Square by Margot.

In the case of this event–nominalisation, the presence of the indefinite article ‘a’ before ‘walking’ is supposed to indicate that the correct analysis of T23 is that there is an existential quantifier ranging over a countable governing it.⁴⁴ It thus makes complete sense to say ‘Margot walked to Russell Square more than six times in her life’, which can

aspect Marcus relies upon in our discussion, would reject Marcus and others’s use of his points to draw significant ontological conclusions. He thinks that the distinction between states and events is “a distinction between two different ways we have of describing [what goes on]” rather than a “distinction inherent in what goes on” (ibid.). Marcus (2009: 231–232) argues that “Galton misunderstands the significance of his own work” (ibid.: 218). More recently, Galton (2012: 35) states, in a later discussion explicitly about the ontology of these matters, that he regards processes as abstract patterns of behavior, and states and events as concrete realisations of such abstract patterns. Patterns, typically, are nothing over and above the things they are patterns of. Instead, they are how what they are patterns of are presented in space and time. If he’s right, there is no need to reify patterns; no need to reify them as abstractions or as concrete realisations of them. The key to presenting such a theory is, as he writes, that the “theory presented here is consistent with recent theorising about processes in ontology and computer science while being sensitive to insights from the work of philosophers and linguistics over the years” (ibid.: 35). It is not just on the basis of linguistic data, and, hence, not just on the basis of what we can know from looking at the TBRs and the semantics that we can know what the nature of such things are. In this case, it needs to be consistent with the best *ontological arguments*, including Dodd’s “problem of instantiation” (1999: 331f) (see §1.7 above).

⁴²As I said, Galton (2012: 35ff) has his own non-substantive theory. On the theory that I am suggesting, one might think of them as different *modes of being* in the sense of being answers to *how things are* with the individuals and objects involved.

⁴³This more modest, linguistic claim concerning merely categorising predications is made by Leech (1969: 134–137) in the context of the distinction between states and events. His book provides much of the linguistic data on which the philosophers I mention build many of their claims.

⁴⁴See (Steward 1997: 89–91).

be nominalised as ‘There were more than six walkings of Margot to Russell Square in her life’. Because events are countables, the event–nominalisations are count-quantified, and the event–predications are easily redescribed in this manner. This seems to hold in general for event–nominalisations. It seems to make complete sense, for example, when we say ‘There was a running’ or ‘There was an explosion’ or ‘There were twenty reachings.’

State-nominalisations, Mourelatos (1978: 428–429) argues, are different. Consider:

T24: Ed loves Justine.

Take its nominalisation:

T25: There is love for Justine from Ed.⁴⁵

In this case, there is no indefinite article. This seems to indicate that there is no quantifier ranging over countable particulars in this case. Now consider the alternative nominalization:

T26: There is a loving for Justine by Ed.

Or another nominalisation of the same sort of TBR (analogous to the event–nominalisation above):

T27: There are six lovings for Justine by Ed.

It seems less awkward to say:

T28: There was much loving of Justine by Ed.

According to Marcus (2009: 277), following Mourelatos (1978), we do not say T26 and T27, but we do say T28. In the same way, when we consider ordinary stuffs such as water or gold we would not be able to quantify over countables, but rather we would need to mass-quantify. For example, it makes sense to say ‘There was water in the lake’ or ‘There was a lot of water in the lake,’ but we would not say ‘There was a water in the lake’ or ‘There were 100,000 waters in the lake.’⁴⁶ This is evidence for the fact that state–nominalisations are, like stuff–nominalisations, mass-quantified and not count-quantified. By exploring Mourelatos’s strategy of nominalisation transcriptions, we can see that there is a fundamental difference between event–nominalisations and state–nominalisations in terms of which kind of quantifier is appropriate.

⁴⁵Alternative nominalisations can also be: ‘Justine’s loving of Ed’, or ‘the loving of Ed by Justine’.

⁴⁶A minor point I need to make here is that Marcus (ibid.: 218ff) and Steward (ibid.: 114) attempt to argue on the basis of all this linguistic evidence that states are not particulars. Even if they are right to think this about the non-particularity of states, it is important to keep in mind that the similarities between states and mass-quantifiable *stuff* stops there. Quantities of stuff, such as water, are most plausibly *particulars*; though they are not *individuals*. Thanks to E. J. Lowe for emphasising this point to me in conversation. If Lowe is right, this also puts in doubt the conclusion that we should think of states as non-particulars on this basis.

Marcus (2009: 228) suggests that a plausible explanation for this is that events are countable *entities* while states are not; Steward also explicitly argues on this basis that states are *states of affairs* or *facts*, as “essentially structured entities” (ibid.: 114). According to Marcus (ibid.), to accept T26 and T27, is not to talk about states but rather to change the examples in these cases to events. Talking *about* events and talking *about* states in each case is not fixed by the verb or predicate one uses, such as ‘love’ or ‘hate’, but rather is fixed by how the predicates and verbs are used. For different kinds of nominalisation indicate different ways they can be quantified, and importantly indicate totally different categories, or modes of being (more on this later).

However, Steward (1997: 119–120), who applies this point to questions to do with the nature of mental states, considers an objection to the idea that states are not countable and that state–nominalisations are not count-quantifiable. The objection is that some of the paradigm examples of mental states, beliefs, desires, and pains, seem to be count-quantifiable. For example, it is very natural to say that Jonny has a pain in the gut, and paraphrase this as ‘There is a pain in the gut of Jonny.’ However, as Marcus would suggest, when we start talking about beliefs, desires, and states, or any of the usually stative-nouns as count-quantifiable, we are merely *changing the subject*, or in presently relevant terms, we are *talking about different things*. Steward makes this suggestion explicitly as well (ibid.: 120) when she says that there is an ambiguity in the noun ‘state’, where we can read it in the mass or the count sense.⁴⁷ When we are talking *about* count-quantifiable states of pain or desire, it seems that we are merely talking *about* certain occurrences or episodes of pain and desire, which we could count. For instance, ‘Jonny had five pains in his stomach this morning’ is intelligible. But, when we consider what the TMKs are for such a TBR, the best candidates would be the various occurrences of pain that he had in his stomach this morning. But then the pains described would now better be understood as events, rather than states. We are talking *about something different*, or as some might say a different category of thing. Whether to give this *category of thing* that we are talking about an *ontological reading* or a *modest reading* is what is at issue here.

The occurrences of the pain in his stomach, as the arguments so far for the nature of events have indicated, would have a start and a finish, a spatio-temporal location, and thus be countable. Although Steward leaves open the possibility that such problematic cases may indicate that there are countable states, she also suggests that the senses in which such problematic cases allow for a count-quantifiable interpretation just indicate that the candidate states that we are talking *about* should not be counted as states at all.⁴⁸ Whatever reading we give things it seems most plausible then that what has

⁴⁷This is, as she (ibid.) puts it as well, the familiar sense in which we can talk about the distinction between type and token states.

⁴⁸See (Steward ibid.: 120–133) for extensive argumentation that the notion of a token state is very problematic and should be rejected. (Marcus 2009) is an extended argument for this claim. What I have said here in this paragraph is my explanation of why there is a significant change of *subject matter*.

happened is a mere *changing of subject*, a change of what the TBRs are *about*, and hence a change in their relevant TMKs. However, what consequences we must draw or can plausibly draw for the nature of TMKs is what we need to decide. The *ontologists* seem to think that the change of subject indicates that there must be a substantial change in the *kind of entity* we are talking about rather than something more modest.

To perhaps make this *change of subject matter* counterargument to the objection Steward discusses more persuasive, we can see that a similar argument can be leveled against those who would change the usage and semantic-talk of the stuff that I compared states to earlier: stuff such as water or cheese. We could meaningfully say, using the mass-nouns 'water' and 'cheese':

T29: There are three different waters in my glass; I just mixed tap water with Evian and Volvic water.

T30: There are four cheeses in the refrigerator; a Brie, an Old Gouda, a Parmesan, and a Brazilian Minas.

However, when we do this, we are clearly not talking anymore about *stuff*. We are not counting three waters or four cheeses, as three and four particular stuffs. Instead, we are counting three kinds of water, four kinds of cheese or perhaps four blocks of cheese; we are talking *about* kinds and objects, which are count-quantified, and not stuffs, which are mass-quantified. Although there seems to be an ambiguity in meaning, since we can use terms such as 'water' or 'cheese' in various ways, there seems to be a clear way of using these stuff-terms in which clearly different ways of being are represented and talked about. When we use 'water' as a term to represent the stuff water, then the question 'How many?' does not apply. Rather, we ask, 'How much?' So, the ambiguities between the mass-noun uses and the count-noun uses of stuff are not merely grammatical, but actually refer to (or are *about*) different *ways things are*.⁴⁹ This indicates a strong connection between the very subtle features of TBR which indicate a radical difference in *aboutness*, and, hence, a radical difference in the *kinds* of TMKs that different TBRs can be *about* and be made true by.

However, this is compatible with being completely agnostic about what is the right *ontological* theory of the TMKs which make these TBRs true and which they are strictly and fully about. In particular, there seems no reason to take the different kinds of quantification (mass- versus count-quantification) as indicating that there are *entities* in the *metaphysically substantial* sense that I've been avoiding; clearly there are differences in entities involved in the TMKs, but they are not differences in which things exist, but in *how what exists exists*.

It seems that we can use general terms, such as 'stuff' and 'states', as count nouns, perhaps *pragmatically*, and to refer to the species or varieties of *how things can be in the world* individually. So for example, 'cheese' can be used to say, 'We have eaten a lot of

⁴⁹There is no need to claim that they are different things over and above the ways things are.

cheese' and it can be used to say, 'The cheeses of France are various and go exquisitely with wine.'⁵⁰ In this case, as I have pointed out, we use this term ambiguously, sometimes to talk about one kind of way things can be and sometimes to talk about another way things can be. I think that this point holds for states as well as for stuff. Psychologists may, at some point in time, be able to map out all the varieties of different kinds of depression, and, perhaps, be able to mark out all the different kinds of mental states that persons can have. If this is so, we would be able to count all the different depressions and all the different mental states. There may be 227 different mental states and ten different kinds of depression. But, as indicated, what we are counting are the different kinds of mental states and states of depression. We are not counting particular entities (mistakenly construing mental states or depressions as particular countable events or objects). Rather, on these uses of 'state' and 'stuff' as countable terms, we are ranging over *varieties* or *kinds* of states and stuff, which are neither events, states, or stuff themselves, but are nevertheless countable. Thus again, we have changed the subject from states to kinds of states.

But, even though we might be able to make various distinctions based on linguistic evidence between kinds of states versus states, kinds of stuff versus stuff, states versus events, none of these distinctions indicate any distinctions in anything ontologically significant or metaphysically substantial. There is no reason to think, based on the linguistic evidence presented by the various arguments I have presented, that they are further *metaphysically substantial entities* that need to play the *TMK-role*. Rather, we can construe them *fundamentally* or *metaphysically* in all sorts of different ways, for instance as merely aspects of things, being-in-the-wider sense of containing *how things are with entities*. At the very least, there is no good reason to assume that we can know, merely on the basis of the semantics of TBRs, whether what we are talking about is *ontologically substantial*.⁵¹ It seems much more likely that questions concerning the fundamental metaphysical nature of whatever we are talking about will be decided, if at all, by *metaphysical argumentation* rather than argumentation based on TT and language.

4.3 Conclusions: *Part One*

So far, in Part One, I have presented and argued for my favoured aboutness-based version of TT. In §1, I presented the basic assumptions of TT, arguing that BATT is compatible with many of the most important ToTs, and is compatible with pluralism and metaphysical neutralism concerning the nature of TBRs and TMKs. In §2, I presented some of the central features of TAAT, the version of TT which I favour. I presented SAC,

⁵⁰Chappell (1970–71: 62) also clearly highlights this point.

⁵¹In addition, Dodd (1999), as I've pointed out several times, gives us strong *metaphysically salient* reasons for rejecting SOAs and all of these presumably complex entities as entities in their own right.

my version of the best SEM-TAC, informed by the doctrine or theory of intentionality (§2.4–2.7). I also argued that SAC can help us reject NEC as a necessary (§2.8) and sufficient (§2.9) feature of TT. I also argued that TAAT can respond to one of the most serious problems that TT faces, namely P-NEG (§3). In this chapter, I introduced the notion of metaphysical modesty in more depth. I then illustrated how one can see the linguistically-based debate concerning the distinction between different ontological categories in a metaphysically modest way.

4.4 Brief Sketch of the Plan for the Next Four Chapters

In the next four chapters, I shall put TAAT to task by addressing some of the most important in-house debates concerning TT. In §5, I argue that a rival fundamentalist account of TT is metaphysically immodest, on the basis of aboutness reasons and on the basis of structural reasons to do with BATT. In §6, I give a modest reinterpretation of how to catch cheaters. In §7, I present a view called Modest Realism. In §8, I argue that SAC can be put to use to articulate a two-step method of everyday inquiry.

Part II

Some In-House Debates: *Fundamentality, Cheater-Catching, Modest Realism, and Inquiry*

Chapter 5

Truthmaking and Fundamentality: *Rejecting TT-Fundamentalism*

5.1 Introduction

A popular assumption made about TT is that T-REL is a species of grounding. Armstrong, for instance, repeatedly speaks of a TMK being an entity which acts as a truth's "ontological ground" (1978: 150; 1989a: 9; 1989b: 89, 96, 107; 1989c: 56, 89; 1991: 190; 1997: 43, 115, 116). He writes, "The truthmaker is whatever it is *in the world* that makes a truth true. Gustav Bergmann and his followers have used the phrase 'ontological ground' and have had the same thing in mind. The idea is an old one" (1997: 13). Rodriguez-Pereyra (2005: 25ff) argues that the *asymmetry* of T-REL is best explained by understanding that true TBRs require ontological grounds.¹ He further states that for a TBR's truth to be grounded in reality, the ontological grounds which do the grounding must be an *entity* (ibid.: §7).² One way of understanding these kinds of statements and the approach they encapsulate is that the TT-enterprise is just the enterprise of discovering *ontological grounds* for truths.

Inspired by this kind of *ontologically substantial* stance towards T-REL, recent philosophers have been trying to develop a version of TT which construes it as a species of grounding and in doing so ties it closely to the notion of fundamentality. In fact some of these *fundamentalists*, as I shall call them, assume that the notion of fundamentality is intelligible in part by citing truthmaking as a central example. This strand of discussion, I shall argue, is mistaken in its assumptions. As I have argued, *truthmaking* should be understood much more modestly than has usually been thought. In this chapter, I shall argue for something much less "heretical" than Daly (2005: 103) when he says that the phrases such as 'ontological ground of truth' "sounds deep and impressive, but perhaps they are only turns of phrase—empty metaphors without explanatory content" (ibid.),

¹See (Hornsby 2005), which I briefly discuss in fn. 3 in §1, for an extended criticism of Rodriguez-Pereyra's (2005) account.

²See my §4.1.2 against this kind of view, where I discuss Lewis (1992: 218) and Dodd (2002a: 77), who criticise this type of view, and argue that the grounds of truth should not be *ontological* grounds, and hence truths should not be grounded in *entities*, but rather in "how things stand with what exists" (Dodd 2002a: 74).

but still as revisionary: TT does not make fundamentality more intelligible and T-REL does not relate truths with anything more fundamental (unless what is fundamental is what the TBRs in question are about). I shall argue that TMKs should be conceived of as neither specifically always fundamental nor derivative entities of reality.³

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, in §5.2, I present what I call the Schafferian Grounding Project, on which *grounding* is taken to be the main *metaphysical* relation and on which T-REL is understood as a G-REL (a grounding relation), and I introduce my main target in this chapter, what I call TRUTHMAKER FUNDAMENTALISM (TF). Second, in §5.3, I shall present two versions of TF that are distinguished along *structural lines*. I raise three general objections to both of these versions of TF: (1) *structural objections*: TF violates basic principles of BATT; G-REL and T-REL are structurally different; (2) on at least one understanding of fundamentality, TF leads to paradox; (3) TF rests on the unwarranted presupposition that TBRs are categorically less fundamental than TMKs. I shall conclude, on the basis of its unwarranted assumptions and its internal incoherence, that TF is implausible as an account of TT. I then focus on two proposed accounts, Schaffer's and Heil's, and raise objections to their versions of TF. Throughout my discussion I contrast TF with TAAT and round off my comparison in favour of TAAT in §5.5 as the *aboutness objection* to TF.

5.2 Truthmakers and Fundamentality

It is worthwhile to be clear from the start that my target is not everyone who puts truthmaking in terms of grounding and not everyone who claims that truthmaking is a species of grounding. For instance, although I introduced this chapter by mentioning them and they put truthmaking in terms of grounding and TMKs in terms of grounds, neither Rodriguez-Pereyra (especially 2005, and 2015) nor Armstrong (especially 1997) are my targets here.⁴ A charitable interpretation of the general claim to which they might be said to subscribe is that *the truth of a TBR is grounded in* its TMKs, or the *existence* of its TMKs, as they would normally put it. They can be interpreted to think that grounding is a species of necessitation and to use 'grounding' and 'dependence' interchangeably. I already rejected NEC (§2.8–2.9).⁵

My target here are those views which restrict TMKs to those entities which are fundamental and which *make true* TBRs (understood as non-fundamental). Schaffer (2010: 319; among others), the main TF-ist, explicitly articulates the position in ex-

³One can and should replace talk about TMKs as entities with talk about TMKs as entities and how things are with the entities, which is consistent with my view (as sketched in §4.1). However, I'll talk mainly about entities in this chapter merely for the sake of brevity and because the Truthmaker Fundamentalist almost invariably puts her thesis in terms of fundamental *entities*.

⁴(Schnieder 2006: 30) and (Liggins 2012: 269) are others who seem to think that T-REL is a case of grounding but are not TF-ists, and hence not my target.

⁵So does Schaffer (2008a: 309–310; 2008b: 10–17). He rejects NEC for TGro, his version of TF. I reject both NEC and TF for SAC.

actly this way. He writes, “[T]ruthmakers need to be restricted to fundamental entities [...] and [...] I take the core of truthmaking theory to be the idea that truth is a derivative aspect of reality, and thus needs grounding (ibid.). Thus, my target is not *all* grounding versions of TT, but those versions which use the machinery of *fundamentality* to articulate TT and to articulate the TT-relevant notion of *dependence*. This is the metaphysically *substantial* version of TT that I abbreviate as TF. I shall argue in this chapter that this way of understanding truthmaking is flawed; it misunderstands the nature of the T-REL and it misunderstands what TMKs are. I shall argue further that the relation which relates TBRs to the TMKs they are about and according to which the latter endows the former with a property, *being true*, is very unlike the relation which, for example, relates a set of fundamental things with a derivative object by grounding it. T-REL is neither a G-REL of this sort nor are TMKs fundamental.

5.2.1 Some Background: *Truthmaking, Dependence, and Schaffer’s Grounding Project*

As I have already argued in §1.2–1.2.5, BATT minimally requires TD, T-REL, R-TMK, R-ROT, R-TBR, and is compatible with a *pluralism* concerning TMKs (§1.7), TBRs (§1.3) and their natures. TF is a rival to SAC. Therefore, it gives a rival account of how best to understand T-REL and to *go beyond* BATT. Modesty requires that any account which tries to *go beyond* BATT must be compatible with its basic assumptions, or must give good reasons for rejecting or restricting the basic assumptions and the pluralism which is at their heart. Generally, my focus in rejecting TF as a worthy alternative account to SAC is based on (1) the inadequacy of G-REL in capturing the appropriate *asymmetry* of T-REL, and (2) that the restrictions it puts on *pluralism* are not properly motivated. Before I proceed, I present some further background on how the TF-project fits in the overall TT-discussion.

As I mentioned in §1.2.2, the *dependence* in TD is normally taken to be a *metaphysical relation*; this is part of the orthodoxy I reject. But, as we saw throughout §1, the level of metaphysical substantiality can vary from version to version. T-NEC’s account of T-REL as NEC is a metaphysically substantial account. TF is an even more metaphysically substantial account than T-NEC, for with G-REL there are even more metaphysical assumptions about TBRs and TMKs and about T-REL than with NEC.⁶ G-REL is nor-

⁶Schaffer (2010a) is explicit about this when he writes about his version of TT: “as to the truthmaking relation, I here impose some heavyweight metaphysical assumptions [...] I work within a neo-Aristotelian framework, which posits *substances* and *posteriors* related by *ontological dependence* [...] *truth is grounded in the substances*. Truth is *dependent*. Truth is not a basic constituent of reality, and like all dependent abstractions, truth must be *made* from the fundament” (ibid.: 309–310; my adaptations but his emphases). In articulating his assumption that T-REL is what he calls “truthgrounding” (ibid.: 310), he even proudly proclaims that it is “a *twice-heavy assumption* [first] for invoking the neo-Aristotelian framework and [second] for explicating truthmaking within this framework as truthgrounding” (ibid.; my emphasis).

mally taken to be a special type of *dependence relation*: the type of dependence that relates non-fundamental or sometimes called “derivative” entities, relations, properties, etc., with fundamental entities, relations, properties, etc. Fine (2012: especially 39–40) for instance takes G-REL to be variegated rather than unitary; there are many different grounding relations and ‘G-REL’ refers to “some kind of “disjunction” of the special relations” (ibid.: 40). But, he thinks that those who think that it is unitary⁷ have merely singled out a dependence relation that is particularly relevant to metaphysics. What is of most interest to us now are those accounts of *grounding* which take grounding to be a metaphysical relation. On these accounts, metaphysical grounding is normally taken to be a special kind of metaphysical dependence.

Against the norm, The Grounding Project (GP), which I take to be Schaffer’s (2008a, 2008b, 2009, etc.) project, as I understand it, tries to understand *all dependence relations* as different species of the overall genus: *grounding*. They are all grounding relations. And grounding is supposed to be a primitive, unanalysable relation. Schaffer writes:

Grounding should rather be taken as primitive, as per the neo-Aristotelian approach (c.f. [sic] Fine 2001: 1). Grounding is an unanalyzable but needed notion—it is the primitive structuring conception of metaphysics. It is the notion the physicalist needs to explicate such plausible claims as “the fundamental properties and facts are physical and everything else obtains in virtue of them” (Loewer 2001: 39). It is the notion the truthmaker theorist needs to explicate such plausible claims as: “Must there not be something about the world that makes it to be the case, that serves as an ontological ground, for this truth?” (Armstrong 1997: 115; c.f. [sic] Schaffer [2010a]). [Schaffer 2009: 364–5]

But because grounding is a primitive and unanalysable notion, grounding theorists who follow especially Schaffer (2009), have assumed that the notion of grounding and fundamentality is intelligible in most part only by citing examples and via an intuitive grasp of the concepts. In the recent literature on fundamentality, especially in the writings of such philosophers as Barnes (2012: 876), TT is sometimes assumed to be one of the best ways to understand fundamentality and a paradigmatic example of grounding. Barnes writes that “fundamentality can be cashed out in terms of truthmakers” (ibid.). Other examples usually cited to illustrate the intuitiveness of fundamentality and grounding are Socrates and the singleton set {Socrates}, the mind-body relation, the relation between moral and natural properties, etc.; see (Schaffer 2009: 375). Thus, we have the Schafferian GP of subsuming truthmaking into this general theory of grounding and fundamentality. We can sum up this *metaphysically substantial* view of truthmaking as follows:

TF: T-REL is a species of grounding which links TBRs understood as derivative, non-fundamental entities to TMKs understood as non-derivative, fundamental entities.

⁷See Rosen (2010), Schaffer (2009), and Audi (2012b), who Fine (2012: 37ff) cites and discusses.

5.3 Varieties of Fundamentalist Structure: *Hierarchical and Two-tier Fundamentalism*

The basic idea behind TF is that T-REL is a species of G-REL, that is, the relation that relates fundamental entities with derivative entities.⁸ TT develops TD, the basic intuition that truth depends, at least in some important way, on reality. According to TF, T-REL is a species of a technical sense of grounding as applied to truth and reality, where truth is what is derivative, reality is what is fundamental, and T-REL is the G-REL which grounds truths in reality.

There are many different versions of fundamentalism. Along structural lines, we can distinguish between two main forms:

- (1) levels (or hierarchical) fundamentalism; and
- (2) two-tier fundamentalism.

5.3.1 Levels or Hierarchical Fundamentalism

Levels fundamentalism is the view that there are various levels of reality, that some of these levels are more fundamental than others, and that there is one level that is the most fundamental.⁹ Basically, the idea is that there is a hierarchy of levels and that derivativeness and fundamentality can come in degrees; some levels and the entities on those levels are more fundamental and thus also less derivative than others. The Schafferian GP-ist¹⁰ captures this view by talking about its key structural features, features he thinks are essential to grounding, as opposed to dependence in general. Schaffer writes,

Grounding is an asymmetric, irreflexive, transitive relation. It thus induces a partial ordering, whose minimal elements are the fundamental entities (the ground of being, that on which all else depends). [2008b: 17]

He continues the same line of thought elsewhere, saying, “It thus induces a partial ordering over the entities (*the great chain of being*), with foundations (the substances,

⁸One might interpret Barnes and others differently, perhaps as saying that fundamentality implies something about truthmaking, rather than that it is part of fundamentalism that truthmaking is a version of fundamentality. The way that I interpret the fundamentalist project and what I am arguing against is the claim that truthmaking is a species of grounding which relates fundamental entities with non-fundamental entities. This is a stronger claim than the claim that we can learn something about the T-REL from understanding what fundamentality and grounding are. I assume, however, that the stronger claim is what the fundamentalist wants to defend. The view that I defend is that truthmaking is not a species of grounding (as understood by GP). This is compatible with the idea that we can learn something about truthmaking in its contrast to grounding, which is *an aim* of this chapter.

⁹Cf. Cameron (2008e: 13), who argues that it is *possible* that “dependence never bottoms out in fundamentality” (ibid.). However, he adds, “We have reason to think that our world is not like that” (ibid.). Also, interestingly, Schaffer (2003: 498ff) rejects this *fundamentalist* picture on which there is a fundamental level. Schaffer’s move towards *fundamentalism*, articulating a hierarchy *with* a fundamental level, starts most explicitly with (2009: §3, 373ff), and continues as TF in (2010a: 311ff; among others).

¹⁰See especially (Schaffer 2008a: 307–316, 2008b: 17–19, 2009: *passim*).

the foundation post for the great chain of being)" (2009: 376). He adds that grounding has the same structural features as, and is "exactly like[,] the classical mereological relation of *having as a proper part* [...] whose ordering provably is well-founded (in fact it provably has a unique foundation, *the whole universe*)" (ibid.). What these structural features mean for the relation is that for some entities x , y , and z if x grounds y , then y cannot ground x (asymmetry), x cannot be identical to y (irreflexivity), and if y grounds z , then x grounds z (transitivity).¹¹ What makes the levels-version distinctive is that it interprets the transitivity feature of the grounding relation in such a way that the fundamental *grounds* the derivative in a *hierarchical way*. The particular way the relation is *transitive* allows for a structured hierarchy, with an absolute fundamental level which serves as the foundation for all the other levels, which in turn are derivative and vary in degrees of relative derivativeness and relative fundamentality.

5.3.2 Two-tier Fundamentalism

Two-tier fundamentalism holds that fundamentality does not come in degrees. Something is either fundamental or it is derivative. Barnes (2012) follows Schaffer in his explication of the structural features of the grounding relation but interprets the *transitivity* feature in a slightly different way. She writes,

Being derivative, in this characterization, is irreflexive, asymmetric, and transitive (but only trivially so, since you never get chains of derivativeness). Derivative entities are derivative only on fundamental entities, never on other derivative entities. [ibid.: 877]

The difference between the two views is clear enough.¹² As I see it, we can put the difference thus: fundamentality (or its opposite, derivativeness) comes in degrees on all hierarchical versions of fundamentality, but both fundamentality and derivativeness are absolute on the two-tier view. On the hierarchical view, there is an absolutely fundamental level, but it is one of many levels with a degree of fundamentality or derivativeness. On one way to think about it, fundamentalia are absolute and derivativeness comes in degrees, where some levels of derivativeness are further from the fundamental level than others. Alternative versions might have fundamentality as coming in degrees. On the

¹¹This account of grounding follows Schaffer (2009: §3, among others) and Barnes (2012: 877–878, 892–894), though their views diverge in important ways (see §5.3.2). Cf. Jenkins (2011: *passim*) rejects this picture of the structure of grounding and dependence, and argues that grounding is not irreflexive but *quasi-reflexive* (ibid.: 268–269, 274–275). Her argument is interesting because it shows how the irreflexivity of grounding yields an incompatibility between dependence claims and identity claims. For example, some philosophers claim that the mental depends on the physical, but also claim that they are identical. The irreflexivity of a relation means that an entity cannot be related to itself by that irreflexive relation. If grounding is irreflexive, then the mental and the physical cannot be identical if one grounds the other. In this case, the mental/physical entity would ground itself. I agree with the consensus that the grounding relation, if there is such a relation, is irreflexive. The result that I take Jenkins's paper to supply is the thought that if X depends on Y , X cannot be identical to Y , rather than her conclusion, that dependence is not irreflexive.

¹²See (Barnes ibid.: 878) for a diagram which makes the difference even clearer.

two-tier view, neither derivativeness nor fundamentality come in degrees; they are both absolute features; something is either fundamental or it is derivative. Some of the differences I mark out here might just be differences in ways of speaking about derivative and fundamental levels, where ‘degrees of derivativeness’ and ‘degrees of fundamentality’ pick out the same thing. Nonetheless, there are possible accounts where the differences are real.

Despite these distinct versions of fundamentalism, the general picture as applied to truthmaking is the same on both accounts: the TMKs are supposedly the fundamental entities, truths are derivative, and the relation which relates them is a species of grounding. Whether or not two-tier or hierarchical fundamentalism is the right view of fundamentality, TT is *ill-suited* as a species of fundamentality, and in particular T-REL is not an instance of G-REL on either of these pictures. I shall explain why in turn.

5.3.3 Against Hierarchical TF

First, it is hard to make sense of the idea that T-REL yields a hierarchy of levels. Although this seems to me false as well, let’s say that talk of levels is appropriate for T-REL.¹³ T-REL can be construed as a two-tier or two-level relation which relates truths at one level with TMKs at another. Even on the assumption that one of these levels is *more* fundamental, where would the hierarchy lie? Even if we all generally agree that there is a hierarchy of fundamental or derivative entities, the hierarchy at either the level of truths or the level of TMKs would not have anything to do with the T-REL. The hierarchy and differences in levels of fundamentality amongst real-world-TMKs does not derive from their status as TMKs but rather from their G-RELs. Let’s assume that T-REL is a G-REL. The G-RELs that relate TMKs with other TMKs (for example, the table and its fundamental parts), and not to truths or TBRs, could not be the T-REL since TMKs do not truthmake anything other than TBRs.¹⁴ It is clear then that T-REL would be a special type of G-REL, very different from other G-RELs.

Any hierarchy (or differences) in levels of fundamentality amongst *truths* most plausibly has to do with the G-RELs amongst their TMKs and has nothing to do with the fact that these truths are related to their TMKs by T-REL. It is hard to see how there is any sense in which there is a hierarchy amongst *truths* that is not derivative on the hierarchy amongst their TMKs. So, if there is any hierarchy at all, most plausibly it would be a hierarchy amongst TMKs. In fact, I see no reason to think that their status as TBRs or *truths*, and their being in T-REL with TMKs, has any effect on any possible hierarchy amongst the truths. The same goes with hierarchies amongst the TMKs, the real world entities (and how things are with those entities) which can play the TMK-role.

¹³Talk of levels may be completely inappropriate for T-REL, as I suggest in §5.3.9.

¹⁴See Barnes’s (2012: 876–877) discussion of truthmaking as an example of what I take to be an infelicitous use of the locution ‘to truthmake’, which misses the point I am making here.

These might be related to other TMKs with G-RELS (e.g. constitution or essential dependence), but I see no way that their status as TMKs or their being in T-REL with TBRs has any effect on any fundamentality/derivativeness hierarchy. Whatever hierarchy there is amongst them derives from issues orthogonal to their being in a T-REL with anything.¹⁵

Let's say that some entities which are TMKs are more fundamental than others. The fact that one entity is more fundamental than another doesn't seem to have anything to do with whether they make any truths true or not, and their relative fundamentality doesn't have any effect on their being TMKs or not. Let's say that atomists are correct and microscopic atomic entities are the most fundamental entities and that all macroscopic entities, which are ultimately composed out of the atomic entities, are derivative and are more derivative depending on how similar they are to the atomic entities. Let's say that on this picture both the chair, which is a medium-sized macroscopic entity, and the atoms out of which the chair is composed are separately TMKs for the TBR 'the chair exists'.¹⁶ The chair seems to be a TMK for the TBR 'the chair exists' whether or not it is fundamental. Even though both are TMKs for the TBR, the hierarchy amongst the two sets of TMKs has no bearing on their status as TMKs. There doesn't seem to be any good reason to think that either TMK is a *better* TMK than the other. If anything, the chair, the less fundamental entity, seems better suited as a TMK than the atoms for the truth 'the chair exists' since the statement is strictly speaking not about atoms but about the chair, which happens to be made out of atoms. But, whether or not one level is better suited as a TMK, the hierarchical relations that the two TMKs have in terms of their relative fundamentality doesn't translate into a hierarchy amongst TMKs, as TMKs.

In fact, if we leave aside aboutness for the moment, one might ask a further question about the relevance of the fundamentality hierarchies for truthmaking. According to the fundamentalist atomist the atoms are more fundamental than the chairs which they compose. As I have pointed out, it is not clear that the atoms are *better* candidates than the chair for being the TMKs for the claim that the chair exists. But, we can ask the same question concerning the claim that the atoms exist. The fundamentalist somehow also needs to explain why one cannot say that the chair itself makes true the claim that the atoms out of which it is composed exist. So long as the atoms are atoms in the chair, it isn't clear that the fundamentalist has a good explanation of why the atoms are better candidates than the chair to be the TMKs for the claim that those atoms exist. Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that atoms are fundamental, it is very unclear why their status as fundamental entities make them better candidates for truthmaking.

However, if we think about truthmaking in terms of, or at least as having a close

¹⁵My argument in §5.3.4 strengthens my skepticism that T-REL has any effect on such hierarchies.

¹⁶I assume this, because, remember, I am exploring the plausibility of a multi-layered hierarchy here.

link with, aboutness, it is clear why the chair is ruled out as the TMK for the claim that those atoms exist: the claim is not *about* the chair which those atoms compose, but it is specifically *about* the atoms. On this alternative account, the atoms are not the TMKs for that claim *because* they are what is fundamental, but because they are what the claim is about. The main point here is that it isn't clear, without further explanation from the fundamentalist, why the fundamental hierarchy amongst the entities (understood independently of their role as TMKs) has any bearing on which candidate TMKs are better suited as *truthmakers* for the specific claims that they are supposed to make true (though we might better understand¹⁷ why fundamental entities are good *realitymakers*, together with G-REs, of derivative entities).

Perhaps the atomist, as a hierarchical fundamentalist, thinks that T-REL is a species of grounding where only the *absolute* fundamental level can serve as TMKs. This would mean however, that the hierarchical fundamentalist doesn't think that the hierarchical structure of fundamentality is appropriate for truthmaking. Instead, T-REL, as the hierarchical fundamentalist would then have to concede, is a two-tier relation. And that has its own problems as I'll now explain.

5.3.4 Against Two-tier TF 1: *Aboutness as More Modest*

Before going into the other problems for two-tier TF, I want to explain how this view can address the problem I raised for hierarchical TF. Barnes (2012) clearly states the two-tier TF-ist position when she writes, "For any derivative entity x , ' x exists' is true but made true, not by x , but by some collection of fundamental entities $y_1 \dots y_n$ " (ibid.: 877). A consequence of this is that no tables, assuming that they are derivative and not fundamental, make true TBRs such as 'tables exists'. What makes such TBRs true are *fundamentalia*. In her discussion she considers a theory on which only *tropes* are fundamental, so I'll use that example for now.

An initial problem with this view is that, assuming that *tables* exist and are part of our ontology albeit as non-fundamental entities, there does not seem to be any good reason to rule out tables as TMKs. It should be clear that we can rule out *eliminativists* from our discussion. We are considering what the TMKs are for TBRs such as 'tables exist'. An eliminativist about tables should say that such TBRs are false anyway. If tables do not exist, then TBRs such as 'tables exist' should not be true on any reasonable theory.¹⁸ Given that tables exist and are presumably not fundamental, the TF-ist would have to explain why being non-fundamental rules them out as TMKs. Many TT-ists allow that TBRs have multiple TMKs (see §1.5); in fact this is the central characteristic feature of

¹⁷I only claim that the general idea might be better understandable. As the essays on "reality-making" in Jago (2016) attest, how exactly we should understand the reality-making of derivative entities by fundamental entities is a complicated matter, without anything close to a consensus.

¹⁸I briefly discuss such less-than-reasonable, though influential, theories in §5.3.5, and more extensively in §6.

TT which Armstrong thinks marks it out as a different theory from (and an improvement on) CT. Even if the TF-ist is right that fundamentalia make TBRs true, if TBRs can have multiple TMKs, then it seems tenuous to say that TBRs *about* derivative entities cannot have the derivative entities they are about as one of its multiple TMKs. This is clear especially because a virtue of TAAT is that with A-REL we already have an intuitive and semantically respectable link between TBRs and the world. Thus, thinking of T-REL as complementing A-REL is comparatively modest. By contrast to thinking of T-REL in terms of A-REL, thinking of T-REL in terms of G-REL has no precedent in semantic theory. In fact, it seems much more natural to think that the table is the TMK for the TBR ‘this table exists’. The TBR is about a particular table and not *about* tropes or subatomic particles or any other supposedly fundamental entities. Tables are plausibly related to their constituent fundamentalia via the relation of *constitution*, which is most plausibly a sort of G-REL. If indeed the constituent fundamentalia are TMKs for the same TBRs, it seems more natural to think that *this* is in virtue of the fact that they are what happen to constitute *the table*. This makes it that if the fundamentalia play a role in truthmaking at all, this is *derivative* from the G-RELs between the fundamentalia and the TMKs that the TBRs are about.¹⁹ Whatever role, if any, fundamentalia play, if non-fundamentals count as TMKs at all, then TF is false. Given the intuitive appeal of this alternative story making tables more natural and plausible TMKs, we would need strong reasons to deny that this is the right story.

5.3.5 Reply & Response: *Deflationary vs Inflationist Fundamentality*

At this point, the TF-ist might reply that there is an interpretation of AC (§2.2) where TF can accommodate the intuitiveness of TMKs being what TBRs are *about*. They might claim that when they speak about a particular table, they are talking about something that consists in fundamentalia, and that in this sense, they are speaking about fundamentalia.

We can see what is wrong with this move when we recall my discussion of *derivative aboutness* in §2.4.2.2. Just to recap, on my account, the fundamental story contains what Quine calls *collateral information*, that is, mere background information that is not the information conveyed in the TBR itself. The information about fundamentalia and about fundamentality only comes with further TBRs, which are strictly and fully about what is fundamental. What a TBR is *strictly* and *fully* about is captured by the TBR’s non-collateral information. The TBR is not about any further entities (and how they are) to which they might be related, and is not about any other properties or relations that the entities described might instantiate other than the ones explicitly discussed in the TBR. The *full* content of the TBR has no information about fundamentalia or

¹⁹See my discussion of *derivative aboutness* in §2.4.2.2.

fundamental relations. At best, the TBRs are only *derivatively about* the fundamentalia which ground the TMKs which the TBRs are strictly and fully about.

Barnes, who I mentioned at the beginning of this section, might be able to reply to my objection here. Her overall position might be a version of what Solodkoff and Woodward (2013: 566ff) call “deflationary” fundamentality (D-FUND), on which one is concerned with contrasting descriptions of reality, which consists only of fundamentalia.²⁰ For D-FUND-ists, reality is such that there are no tables. ‘Tables exist’ is true, but the only ontology that’s out there to make it true is fundamental ontology (in the above description, tropes-ontology) since the derivative objects (the tables) don’t *really* exist. So, when I say that the table seems to be a TMK for ‘the table exists’, the D-FUND-ist would flatly deny this, since given her ontology there are no tables to make the TBR true. Instead, fundamentalia are the best candidates for truthmaking since they are the only candidates.²¹

This contrasts with a radically distinct picture that Solodkoff and Woodward (ibid.) call “inflationist” fundamentality (I-FUND), of which the main philosophers I discuss in this chapter such as Schaffer are proponents.²² I-FUND-ists think that reality includes both fundamental and derivative entities, and are not concerned with ordering descriptions, but rather with ordering reality. On this view, *tables* exist but are derivative *entities*, not just objects of derivative *descriptions*. The I-FUND-ist cannot just flatly deny that the table seems to be not only a perfectly good but a better, more natural, candidate-TMK for TBRs such as ‘the table exists’. Given her ontology, there are tables, but they do not make true TBRs about them; only fundamental reality makes true any and all truths. Against the background of what I have argued in this section, it seems clear that SAC is a more modest, and hence more preferable, account to TF.

As should be clear from my position that TT-ists should not build into TT any metaphysical commitments (this becomes even clearer in §6, on cheaters), I have no issue on TT-grounds with D-FUND-ists. I hereby restrict my discussion of TF to I-FUND, not D-FUND.

5.3.6 Against Two-tier TF 2: *The Falsity Paradox of TF*

Even though T-REL is more plausibly a two-tier relation which relates entities at two levels (the level of TMKs and the level of the TBRs) rather than hierarchically, I shall argue, in the next sections, that it does not have a two-tier structure either.

First, if we follow my reasoning, on at least one plausible understanding of what distinguishes the fundamentalists’ two levels (the fundamental level and the derivative

²⁰This view is most explicitly defended by Williams (2010: 103ff; 2012: 169ff), but also by Cameron (2010a: 249ff), Melia (2005: 67ff), Sider (2012: 348 and §8; and 2013: 241ff).

²¹For instance, Cameron (2010b: 16ff) argues that fundamentalia or what he calls “real existents [what *really* exists] are the *truthmakers* for the true sentences of English” (ibid.: 16).

²²Barnes herself is *explicitly neutral* about I-FUND and D-FUND (2012: 879). So, I don’t attribute either view to her.

level), applying their structure to T-REL leads to an unsettling *paradox*. Schaffer claims that the ontologically prior foundations, the entities at the fundamental level, are “the basic, ungrounded entities” (2014: §3.1.2).²³ He even *defines* the notions of “fundamental entity” and “derivative entity” in terms of whether or not the entities are grounded; he provides these definitions (2009: 373):

Fundamental: x is fundamental $=_{df}$ nothing grounds x .

Derivative: x is derivative $=_{df}$ something grounds x .

Thus, on this criterion, something is fundamental *iff* it is not grounded by anything. A consequence of this is that if something is ungrounded, then it is fundamental.

On this very standard account, TBRs which are not grounded in reality would be fundamental. But, presumably, TBRs which are not grounded in reality are falsehoods. According to the TF-ist, falsehoods just are TBRs which are ungrounded, while truths are TBRs which are grounded in reality. But, on Schaffer’s definition of fundamentality, something which is ungrounded is more fundamental than something which is grounded. This would yield the counterintuitive and paradoxical result that falsehoods are more fundamental than truths. It is an unattractive account of fundamentality which has the consequence that falsehoods are more fundamental than truths. So, at least on one account of fundamentality, TF leads to an unsettling paradox.

One potential response might be that a TF-ist should not claim that falsehoods are ungrounded. Rather, a much more sensible position might be that truths are grounded in their TMKs, whilst falsehoods are also grounded in reality, perhaps a totality fact or the absence of their TMKs.²⁴ However, this response is unsatisfactory. The response, which is a standard extension of the normal metaphysically substantial account of TT, is faced with accounting for not just negative truths but falsehoods in terms of positively existing absences or mysterious totality facts. Recall §3.2 for the standard P-NEG. But the problem goes even deeper. Not only would they have to claim that absences, negative facts, or totality facts (and hence also incompatibility facts) *exist* as the standard metaphysically extravagant accounts of TT would, but the TF-ist would have to claim that they *exist fundamentally*. T-NEC-ists have a hard enough time convincing skeptics to accept absences and negative facts; no one would accept such entities as *fundamental*.

Another potential response would be to deny that T-REL is a species of G-REL of the same sort as the G-REL in play when chairs are grounded by the atoms out of which they are composed (or in Schaffer’s metaphysics, the G-REL in play when chairs are grounded in the-world-as-a-whole²⁵). If G-REL and T-REL are different relations, then the fact

²³Another example is Bennett (2011: 27) who explicitly states that by ‘fundamental’ she means ‘ungrounded’. She requires this sense of ‘fundamental’ to generate the particular puzzles she discusses.

²⁴I owe consideration of this suggestion to helpful comments made by an anonymous referee at *MIND*.

²⁵See (Schaffer 2010b: 65) for an extended defence of “priority monism”, which is “the doctrine that the cosmos is the one and only basic actual concrete object, prior to any of its proper parts” (ibid.). This doctrine is contrasted with views such as “existence monism” (Horgan and Potrč 2008, 2012),

that a falsehood is not made true by reality would not have the consequence that it is in any way more fundamental than any truths. However, this result is incompatible with TF, which requires that T-REL is a species of G-REL no different than other G-RELS.

Another response to this argument could be that there are other criteria for fundamentality which would block the paradoxical result. One could claim that the argument rests too much on the criterion that what is ungrounded is fundamental. Schaffer (2013), for instance, uses another criterion to capture what it is for something to be fundamental. Discussing what he calls “Leibnizian Substance,” he explores and uses the notion of ‘substance’, which he defines thus: “Something is a substance if and only if it is a fundamental and integrated thing” (ibid.: 68).²⁶ He explains that the notion of Leibnizian substance connects the notion of substance with the notion of fundamental law, adding that “a substance must *evolve* by the fundamental laws, by which I mean that a substance must be such that plugging its state at any given time into the fundamental laws correctly predicts its actual behaviour” (ibid.: 68–9).²⁷ Thus, someone following Schaffer’s usage here might try to argue that to be fundamental is to evolve by the fundamental laws.

It is difficult to see, however, how this criterion of fundamentality can help the TF-ist. Presumably, falsehoods would not be fundamental on this account because they are not subject to the fundamental laws—blocking the move I made in the argument. This criterion of fundamentality, however, does not help us understand why truths are grounded while falsehoods are not. TBRs are presumably not the kinds of things which evolve under the fundamental laws generally. For example, it does not really make sense to say that TBRs *evolve* at all. One might say that a sentence evolves because its meaning and aboutness might change over time. However, (1) it would not make sense to say that other TBRs such as propositions evolve or change at all. And (2), the type of change involved here doesn’t seem to be the type of change involved with evolution according to the fundamental laws. At best what is involved in such cases is evolution

which is the strictly stronger view that the-world-as-a-whole, the cosmos, is the only concrete object — it is stronger because existence monism entails priority monism but not vice-versa.

²⁶By ‘integrated’ he means what some call a “substantial unity.” He quotes Aristotle to help clarify what this means: “that which is compounded out of something so that the whole is one – not like a heap, but like a syllable” (1984a: 1644). Something has a substantial unity or is integrated if it is a simple, and thus is not composed of anything, or if it is composed of parts in such a way that the parts compose a whole new object, in the vein of van Inwagen’s (1990: 20, 31) so-called “Special Composition Question.” Van Inwagen’s answer (ibid.: §12), just to present an illustrative example, is that several objects $[x, y, z]$ compose another object r if the objects jointly constitute a life, that is, a living organism.

²⁷Although I explore how one might respond to my arguments by exploring this definition, I want to remark that I think these are interesting claims outside of the context of this discussion. If we thought that the fundamental laws are physical laws, then presumably everything which evolves and is subject to the physical laws will have evolved with the fundamental laws and hence would be fundamental (as long as it is also integrated). Since everything that exists presumably evolved with the fundamental laws, everything is fundamental (as long as it is also an integrated unity). It is clear that many things are integrated unities. Thus, even if we concede to van Inwagen and accept his answer to the Special Composition Question, then everything that is simple or alive is fundamental.

according to social laws concerning linguistic communities. One might think that the criterion helps to explain what TMKs can be on *their* account, that is, the TF-ist seems to require that TMKs are entities which evolve by fundamental laws. However, I do not see any reason to make such a restriction on TMKs. For one, it goes no way into elucidating how T-REL at all has a structure similar to other G-RELS. In fact, this criterion of fundamentality helps to show that we might just be talking about very different relations. This criterion might help to explain what entities are fundamental, but it neither explains how fundamental entities are related to non-fundamental entities, nor does it explain how either of them are related to TBRs. This account of fundamentality in fact does not use any notion of *grounding* at all in elucidating what a substance is or what is fundamental. At best, the alternative criterion is completely orthogonal to the issues that we are considering now.

The main point I want to draw from this discussion is this. If the TF-ist wants to put T-REL in terms of fundamentality, she cannot just subsume truthmaking under the fundamentalist flag and explain that T-REL is just a primitive, unanalysable species of grounding, as Barnes, Schaffer, and other fundamentalists seem to want to do when listing their favourite instances of grounding. That would be *ad hoc*. Given the variety of accounts of grounding and fundamentality, she would need to go some way in explaining how it is at all similar, especially given the differences that I have pointed out up until now. One cannot just assume that T-REL is a species of G-REL.

5.3.7 Against Two-tier TF 3: *Intentionality and Fundamentality*

Second, even though T-REL is more plausibly a two-tier relation, it doesn't seem appropriate to call either truths or TMKs more fundamental than each other. Truths are just TBRs (sentences, propositions, statements, etc.) which are true. Assuming that all TBRs need to exist to be either true or false, it doesn't seem appropriate to say that they are any less fundamental than the TMKs which make them true. Just because they are linguistic or mental entities does not provide any *a priori* or even empirical reason why they should be ruled out as fundamental. In short, if anything is fundamental, why not TBRs?

In fact, the assumption that TBRs are any less fundamental than any other entity, such as, say, atoms or Leibnizian monads or the Spinozan world-as-a-whole, opens up a whole set of problems which I think no one in this debate has adequately dealt with. TBRs, by virtue of *being about things*, have intentionality. How anything has semantic properties such as *being about something* (e.g. turtles), as famously stated by Fodor, “proves permanently recalcitrant to integration in the natural order” (1984: 232).²⁸ Indeed, there is no agreed upon or convincing reduction available of the intentional to any other order. Chalmers (2012: 274–279) calls the problem of grounding intentionality one

²⁸I do not use this quotation as evidence for, but rather as an expression of, my skepticism.

of the “hard cases” (ibid.: 261).²⁹ For instance, he diagnoses Kripke’s version of Wittgenstein’s rule-following argument (Kripke 1982) as turning on the idea that no reductive analysis of intentionality can be given in non-intentional terms (Chalmers ibid.: 275). Chalmers also considers the idea that “physical and phenomenal information underdetermines belief [that is, intentional] content” (ibid.).³⁰ Thus, on pain of misconstruing this hard case as an easy problem, it seems that one cannot merely assume that the intentional is reducible to any other order. The question of whether intentionality is fundamental is of course an interesting and important topic, itself suitable for book-length treatment.

In general, one cannot merely assume that the intentional is not fundamental, nor reducible to any other order. For there is nothing odd about intentionality that makes it important or urgent that we find some way to reduce it, or make it non-fundamental. Fodor, for instance, is raising a problem for physicalists who are also intentional realists. Physicalism is the view that all the fundamental features of the world are physical. As a physicalist, one must give a physicalist explanation of intentionality, a feature of the world that classically has been taken to be non-physical and by some, including the philosopher who re-introduced the notion to philosophy, Brentano (1874: 88–89), as the mark of the mental.³¹ One can do this, for instance, by explaining how intentionality is a feature of physical states, making it plausible to think that the intentionality of mental states or linguistic entities can be understood as being physical as well.³² In either case, the intentional realist might very well be correct and intentionality might be a *sui generis* feature of the world that is not grounded in the physical or any other realm. Instead, as the intentional realist might claim, intentionality is the mark of the mental, as an independent realm or level of reality. On the other side, the naturalist or physicalist

²⁹In particular, it is a hard case for Chalmers’s (ibid.) *fundamentalist* project, which aims to construct a theory of the world based on fundamental truths, from which all other truths are derivable, *a priori*.

³⁰Famously, he argues that the phenomenal is not reducible to the physical (or otherwise fundamental). See (Chalmers and Jackson 2001: 315ff), (Chalmers 1996), (Jackson 1994, 1998). They argue that reductive explanations of the phenomenal fail. However, see (Snowdon 2010) for an extended critique of the notion that experience can be characterised as being something that it is like for someone to undergo. If Snowdon is right and experience cannot be characterised in this way, then there is no point in trying to reduce this feature of experience to anything else. The what-it-is-like-ness of experience is not the same as the intentionality of experience (understood as the way experience relates to the rest of the world), which is my concern here.

³¹See (Brentano 1874: 88ff) and (Chisholm 1957: §12); Chisholm argues that Brentano’s thesis is correct on the basis that intentional vocabulary cannot be reduced to non-intentional vocabulary. Crane famously calls this “Brentano’s Thesis” (2001: vii).

³²See (Martin 2008: especially 150f) for an account like this, on which intentionality is a perfectly natural phenomenon exhibited in anything with dispositionality. For example, sugar’s disposition to dissolve in water is in some ways *about* the potential manifestations that occur when water and sugar are put in the right situation where the disposition can be manifested. Or see (Dretske 1980, 1981, 1995) for an information-theoretic proposal which argues that anything that carries any sort of *information* has some degree of intentionality. In short, some system *S* carries information about *B* if there is a nomic relation between *S*’s being *A* and the instantiation of *B*. For example, fire carries information about smoke, because something’s being on fire is nomically related to the instantiation of smoke. Both these models are attempts to “naturalize” intentionality. Whether or not the intentionality of such things as beliefs or statements can be accounted for in these ways is an open question. And that is my point.

might be correct and intentionality might actually just be part of the physical world. In both cases, intentional entities could be fundamental and part of the ultimate furniture of the world.

Indeed the fact that it has proved so recalcitrant to integration might be because it is fundamental and cannot be accounted for in other terms. Of course, the recent enthusiasm for grounding is in part motivated by the idea that non-reducible realms can be argued to be non-fundamental. For instance, a non-reductive physicalist can argue that the mental is not reducible to the physical but is *grounded* in the physical. But, recent enthusiasm for grounding has not produced any successful attempts to ground intentionality in the non-intentional or in anything else. One might want to be an anti-realist about the intentional and explain away the appearance of intentionality altogether or one might want to explain how intentional entities such as TBRs, true or false, are not fundamental. Whatever strategy one takes to deny that intentionality is fundamental, the issue is far from settled. So, one cannot just assume, as the TF-ist seems to, that neither intentionality, nor intentional states, are fundamental.

5.3.8 Against Two-tier TF 4: *Problematic Examples*

Finally, another more specific problem is that there are plenty of problematic examples, which undermine the assumption that TMKs are more fundamental than truths or TBRs. Specifically, there are cases which immediately suggest that T-REL can be reflexive while G-REL is clearly irreflexive in those cases. For example, some truths such as ‘This TBR exists’ are about themselves.³³ In such cases, neither the TBR nor the TMK can be more fundamental than the other because they are identical.³⁴

One might object that the problem with these kinds of cases is the same as or analogous to other classical problems with reflexive TBRs. For example, liar TBRs such as ‘This TBR is false’ seem to lead to paradox. A standard response is to prohibit such self-reference as yielding ill-formed TBRs.³⁵ However, this response does not work in the kind of case that I present. The problem that I raise does not just rely on some general trickiness inherent to all reflexive TBRs, which would be resolved by the same solutions as to the Liar. Unlike the liar-TBR, ‘This TBR exists’ is clearly a perfectly well-formed TBR. Of course, it is true and makes itself true as soon as it exists. Because of this, such TBRs might be trivial. But, unlike the liar-TBRs, this kind of reflexive TBR makes

³³Interestingly, Rodriguez-Pereyra (2015: §5) also discusses reflexivity in a similar context. However, he (ibid.: 11–12) argues that G-REL is in general not irreflexive because (1) T-REL is a species of G-REL and (2) on the basis of similar cases, T-REL is clearly irreflexive. I obviously do not accept this argument because I deny that T-REL is a species of G-REL. I follow Fine (2010: 100), Raven (2013: 193–194), Schaffer (2009: 364), Audi (2012a: 102; 2012b: 691–692), and Rosen (2010: 115–116) who all argue that G-REL is irreflexive.

³⁴See my §1.2.1–1.2.2 and §2.5 for reasons why I think cases such as this do not threaten the general *asymmetry* of T-REL.

³⁵See Fumerton (2002: 14) for discussion.

perfect sense and doesn't lead to paradox.

There are also other example TBRs which illustrate that there does not seem to be any *prima facie* reason for thinking that TMKs are more fundamental than truths or TBRs. Take for example, the truth 'You, the reader of this sentence, exist'. This truth does not seem less fundamental than the person, you, whom the truth is about and who makes the truth true. Let's say that you are more fundamental than the TBR. Even then, it is clear that this has little to do with T-REL. It would not be because you make the TBR true that you are more fundamental than the TBR. For instance, it is not a consequence of TD, the intuition that TBRs depends on reality for their truth, that you would be more fundamental. For TD is compatible with non-grounding accounts of dependence. Rather, your relative fundamentality would most plausibly have to do with some more general fundamentality facts concerning humans and how linguistic entities are social constructs which ontologically depend in some relevant way on communities of language-users, such as humans. TD is very unlikely to be the relevant notion of dependence.

Although there may be more ways that the TF-ist could respond to these cases, they at least add to the challenges that I have presented for them.

5.3.9 General Moral of this Discussion: *Varieties of Dependence*

The general moral of this discussion is that even though *dependence* seems to be a right way to understand the relation between truth and reality, and there is something correct about the claim that truths depend for their truth on reality, G-REL and fundamentality do not seem to be helpful notions here. There are plenty of other ways that things can depend on each other. For instance, married couples are mutually interdependent,³⁶ children depend on their parents to lead healthy and happy lives. The dependency in these cases is not asymmetric, and hence not a species of grounding. The metaphysical notion of fundamentality and grounding seems completely inappropriate here. Even though the dependence between truths and TMKs is generally *asymmetric* in some important sense, there is no reason to think that TMKs are in general or ever any more *fundamental* than TBRs, even if the latter depend on the former for their truth. The dependency intuition that truths depend on reality, which ignited the literature on truthmaking, can be accounted for in other ways than by grounding or fundamentality, namely in terms of *aboutness*, as I have tried to make convincing in the last few chapters.

Lastly, as a consequence of the discussion of these past sections, one might become skeptical about whether talk of levels is at all appropriate for TT. Although there is a dependence relation between truths and TMKs, as I have argued, neither seems to be more fundamental than the other. TBRs which are related to their TMKs by T-REL

³⁶See Thompson (2016:47ff) for an extended discussion of interdependence and three arguments in defence of theories of grounding based on what she calls "metaphysical interdependence" (ibid.).

depend-for-their-truth on these TMKs. But, this does not put them at any other *level* than the TMKs. By analogy, just because the moon depends-for-its-visibility on the sun and its position in relation to perceivers, this fact does not make the moon any less fundamental or any more derivative, or put it on any other sort of level than either the sun, us perceivers, or our positions. My suggestion is that talk of levels is *completely inappropriate*, whether hierarchical or two-tier.

5.4 Specific Accounts of TF

I have now provided some general criticisms of the TF-ist approach, on structural grounds, on grounds to do with the internal incoherence and the paradoxicality of certain important versions of TF, on grounds to do with intentionality, and by explaining why SAC is more attractively modest. Now, I want to briefly discuss two main specific versions of TF. I'll start with Schaffer's account.

5.4.1 Specific Accounts 1: *The Case of Schaffer's TGro and the Modest Usefulness of Truthmaking*

Schaffer generalises his view of TT with what he calls TruthGrounding (TGro):

TGro: $(\forall p)(\forall w)$ (if p is true at w then $(\exists x)$ (x is fundamental at w & x grounds the truth of p at w)). $(\exists Xs)$ (every one of the Xs is fundamental, and the Xs are a total ground for the truth of p at w). [2008a: 311]

TGro is clearly a version of TF since it captures both (1) the idea that x , the TMK, grounds the truth of p ; and (2) that everything that is an x and hence everything that is a TMK must be fundamental (and not derivative). Schaffer also puts it more simply:

TGro[*]: $(\forall p)(\forall w)$ (if p is true at w , then p 's truth at w is grounded in the fundamental features of w). [2008b: 10]

TGro is Schaffer's way of formulating T-REL explicitly in terms of G-REL and in terms of fundamentals. The relevant difference for us between TGro and TGro* is just that TGro explicitly quantifies over truth-grounds or TMKs and *goes beyond* BATT by saying more about the quantified Xs , specifically, that they are the *total ground* for the truth of p at w .

It is clear from TGro and TGro* that Schaffer thinks that TMKs need to be fundamental and that only fundamental entities constitute the total grounds for the truth of TBRs. Thus any argument that presents examples of TMKs which are not fundamental or are not the total grounds for the truth of some p at w would constitute a counterexample to his account.

Prima facie, TGro, as an account of T-REL, is clearly incompatible with SAC. On no (popular) account are artefacts such as tables fundamental. But the TBR 'the table

is black' is strictly and fully about a table, and its being black. According to SAC, the table's being black is its TMK. According to TGro, since the TBR is true at w , whatever the TMK x is, it must be fundamental at w and a total ground of the TBR at w . Thus, whatever is the TMK for this TBR according to TGro it is not the table's being black. So, TGro and SAC yield different results. Thus, TGro is clearly incompatible with SAC. A consequence of this is either that SAC or that TGro is not essential to TT. I have been arguing the first and continue to argue the latter.

So far, my examples of fundamentality assumed that *smaller* things are more fundamental than *bigger* things. Perhaps the opposite understanding of fundamentality, though more radical, might fare better. Schaffer has such a radical view of what is fundamental. He doesn't think that there are fundamental X s. Rather, the-world-as-a-whole is what makes true all truths, and is the one, single fundamental X .³⁷ His view is called *priority monism*. Its central claim is that the-world-as-a-whole is the only fundamental entity, and that everything else, including entities such as you or I, neither of whom consist in the entire universe-or-world-as-a-whole, is derivative of the-world-as-a-whole. This view, in part, is a consequence of both his account of grounding and his account of what can constitute a *total ground* for something. There is no need to dispute these claims concerning what is fundamental here. But, I'll briefly raise a relevant *prima facie* problem with thinking that the-world-as-a-whole is the only TMK for all truths.

Understanding that a truth is related to TMKs by T-REL, as I understand these notions, is supposed to be (at least *somewhat*) *useful*.³⁸ However, if there is but one all-encompassing TMK which makes true all and every truth, TT loses its usefulness. the-world-as-a-whole would make true TBRs as diverse as 'The winner of the 100 metre men's singles race at the 2012 London Olympics was Jamaican', 'Vasco da Gama's fleet landed in Kappadu, India on May 20, 1498', and 'Carbon atoms in graphene are arranged in a hexagonal pattern'. All three of these TBRs are true, but that is about all that they have in common. It seems quite clear that it is not useful to explain that the-world-as-a-whole makes true each of these truths, other than to emphasise that the-world-as-a-whole is the only thing that's fundamental and that all truths are grounded in the-world-as-a-whole. Since TT-ists want the notion of truthmaking to be more useful than just to support Schaffer's overall metaphysics of fundamentality, they should reject TGro as capturing T-REL.

The Schafferian has a reply. She might say that she can explain more precisely *how* the-world-as-a-whole makes true each of the TBRs listed above in such a way as to make it clear that whatever usefulness conditions there are, they can be fulfilled. Specifically, the-world-as-a-whole contains different entities such as the recent winner of the 100 metre men's singles race and the structure of carbon atoms. Each of these entities is

³⁷See (Schaffer 2010a and 2010b).

³⁸As I argue in the rest of the chapters in this dissertation, it is only modestly useful, but that's useful enough to make my point here.

part of the-world-as-a-whole. But, it is the-world-as-a-whole's having such-and-such a property or containing such-and-such derivative entities that grounds such truths as da Gama's fleet arriving in India. Importantly, the world does not have this property and these entities contained within it because da Gama landed; rather, da Gama landed because the world has the property and these entities. To address the usefulness worry, the Schafferian will cite very specific facts about the properties of the world, and thereby try to match the informativeness of citing specific properties about smaller entities. Thus, it is in virtue of the fact that the-world-as-a-whole is the way it is, and not that things are the way that they are with da Gama, that the truths are true.

This response however is inadequate and does not solve the problem of the usefulness of truthmaking. The Schafferian will deny that it is in virtue of da Gama's fleet having arrived in India on a certain day that the-world-as-a-whole is the TMK for the TBR above. But why aren't the apparently derivative properties and entities of the-world-as-a-whole the TMKs rather than the-world-as-a-whole? Even if the Schafferian is right and the-world-as-a-whole grounds those derivative facts, the-world-as-a-whole seems to be deriving its status-as-a-TMK from the more specific properties and entities concerning da Gama. The Schafferian TF-ist would reject the idea that those more specific properties and smaller entities are the TMK(s) solely because they are derivative. But this seems wrong, because even if they are derivative entities, the apparently more fundamental entity, that is, the-world-as-a-whole, derives its *TMK-status* from it. Opting for the less fundamental but more specific TMKs, for example the ones involving da Gama rather than the-world-as-a-whole in this case, as the main TMKs, seems to be a better motivated option. The far simpler option is to adopt SAC. SAC explicitly captures why da Gama, his fleet, and the relevant properties of these things, are the primary TMKs for TBRs about them, rather than the other entities such as the-world-as-a-whole which contains these entities and has the same properties. The TBRs are strictly and fully about those more specific and smaller entities, and not strictly and fully about the perhaps more fundamental entities, the-world-as-a-whole which contains these more specific and smaller entities. Even if Schaffer is right about which entities are more fundamental, it seems simpler to think that the-world-as-a-whole derives its TMK-status from its specific properties and the perhaps more derivative entities contained within it.

Holding on to TGro despite this problem is biting a bullet that is clearly too hard. So, Schaffer's version of TF, based on what he takes to be fundamental, namely the-world-as-a-whole, poses no serious threat to SAC.

5.4.2 Specific Accounts 2: *Heil's Moderate TT as TF*

Heil's version of TT, which also emphasises fundamentality, is somewhat less radical than Schaffer's because he is not a priority monist. As I already explained in §3.2, Heil (2000) is taken to be a TT-moderate, who like Mellor (2012a), rejects T-M, restricting

the TMK-principle to only require TMKs for truths that are not complete truth functions of other TBRs (Mellor 2012a: 96). Despite this moderation, his view of T-REL itself is a version of TF. To make this clear, let's start with a quote from Heil (2003):

I am inclined to think that 'this is a statue' can be, and often is, literally true. What makes it true is a complex, dynamic arrangement of particles [. . .] We cannot hope to paraphrase, translate, or replace talk of statues with talk of such collections. Even so, it seems clear that, with few exceptions, objects like statues that populate our everyday surroundings owe their existence to arrangements of more ultimate constituents. [2003: 53–54]

There are a few revealing elements to this quotation. First, Heil is not an error theorist concerning talk that does not directly concern what he might call the "ultimate constituents" of reality—he does not deny that TBRs such as 'this is a statue' are literally true. Second, he is not a reductionist about such TBRs either. Talk of tables is not reducible, in any way, to talk of ultimate reality. As he puts it, "we cannot hope to paraphrase, translate, or replace talk of statues with talk of such collections" (ibid.). These strategies are strategies of reduction, which according to Heil (ibid.) all fail because they are linguistic strategies. The more important, pseudo-reductionist, strategy is what he takes to be the hard-hitting, real world strategy of truthmaking. Which brings us to the third, and most important, element: Heil thinks that truthmaking does the work that perhaps one had hoped reductionism would do. Talk of non-ultimate reality is *made true* by ultimate reality, and this is, as we can gather from the paragraph above, at least in part because things such as tables and statues owe their existence to "arrangements of more ultimate constituents" (ibid.). With truthmaking, the talk concerning tables and chairs can be (1) literally true, while (2) being immune to any linguistic reduction, but still not inflating our ontology with non-ultimate entities, since (3) the talk is *made true* only by ultimate constituents.

Heil is one of the standard-bearers of the so-called *reality-first*, not language-first, approach to inquiry.³⁹ And, TF is one of its main standards, that is, one of the main tools that he uses in this reality-first approach.⁴⁰ Heil (2012: 191ff) argues that ontology is the study of TMKs and not just the study of all that exists, what someone following Quine (1948) would call understanding the "ontological commitments" of our best theories of the world. He writes:

³⁹In short, the language-first approach assumes that language is a guide to knowledge of reality, while reality-first assumes that there is a way of accessing reality directly and not via language. This debate is rich and complicated. I am sympathetic to the reality-first approach because I think that we can gain knowledge of the world more directly than via language by for instance perceiving it. However, I disagree with the reality-first approach because I think that it is obvious that language is indeed a guide to reality; it is where our information and knowledge about the world, passed down from generation to generation, is encoded. The genealogy of words, philology, and understanding ordinary usage, although not the only guides to reality, as the ordinary language philosophers might think (though, I think this is a popular misconception of their position), are definitely very fruitful sources of information and knowledge. It seems to me that completely doing away with ordinary language is a mistake.

⁴⁰This approach originates in work by Martin and Heil (especially, 1999), which announces the end of the linguistic turn (they call it Linguisticism [ibid.: 36]) in philosophy.

Ontology enters only when you turn your attention to the nature of the truthmakers. Knowing what truths you accept is one thing; knowing what it is about the universe in virtue of which those truths are true is another matter altogether. [ibid.: 192]

Specifically, knowing what it is about the universe in virtue of which those truths are true is, according to Heil, getting at “the deep story” about the “nature of truthmakers” (ibid.: 192–193), and “[f]or that you must turn to science [and] [t]he deep story eventually brings in fundamental physics” (ibid.). Thus, to turn to an example that Heil uses, even though we *can* “‘quantify over’ trees [and] [i]t is most unlikely that we could analyze away talk of trees, or translate claims about trees into the language of fundamental physics” (ibid.: 191–2), TBRs about trees (and all our ordinary TBRs) are made true, if true, by fundamental physics. As Heil indicates, he thinks that trees, tomatoes, and the things in ordinary talk *exist*. However, since they are not fundamental, they are not TMKs and are not the subject of ontology; he writes: “Talk of the existence of tomatoes is ontologically innocent when your aim is to get clear on the truths, when your interest is in *tomatoes*. But when you engage in ontology, when your goal is to get clear on the fundamental truthmakers, it is ill advised” (ibid.: 194).

Heil is right that talk of the existence of tomatoes is ontologically innocent, as I think it should be, and that when one engages in *ontology* and one’s aim is to get clear on the fundamental TMKs, it is ill-advised to talk of the existence of tomatoes. But, according to my metaphysically *modest* account, this is because talking about tomatoes is ontologically innocent in the sense that we are not committing ourselves to a metaphysically substantial account of what the nature of tomatoes is. We can speak freely about tomatoes and the existence of tomatoes without committing ourselves to anything about *fundamental reality* or to *fundamental* TMKs, which I would be very open to concede exist. Tomatoes can be TMKs. They just don’t need to be *fundamental* TMKs.

5.4.2.1 Problem 1: *Fundamental Physics Does Not Rule Out Non-Fundamentals as TMKs Nor as Part of the Story of Ontology*

One of the central problems with Heil’s view is that, as with Schaffer’s view above, it is unclear why he thinks that truths about tomatoes, trees, and their properties are not made true by tomatoes, trees, and their properties. Heil agrees that these ordinary things exist, albeit as not fully-formed substances and properties, but rather as what he, following Campbell (1990), calls “*quasi-substances*” or “*quasi-properties*” (Heil 2012: 30). Here he is clearly making a distinction between what exists and what is ontologically not innocent: the fundamentals. But he has a peculiar take on this enterprise; he thinks that discovering what is fundamental is the role of fundamental physics. My question is then: where does ontology and metaphysics come in? Let’s say that fundamental physics is in fact where the “deep story” of the universe, and all its constituent parts, is to be

found. There is no clear indication from Heil why the deep story, which according to him includes talk about *tomato-shaped arrangements of particles*, gives us the right story about the TMKs. All he gives us is an insistence that ontology is about fundamentals. What he's doing, however, is either conflating certain important notions which I think need to be kept separate, or just presenting an unjustifiably narrow view of the field of ontology.

According to his story, all we get when we say that '*the tomato is red*' is true in virtue of the tomato being red is the non-fundamental story about quasi-substances. According to him, the story that fundamental physics can provide is the story of the *nature* of the TMKs. However, the story about the ordinary TMKs that make ordinary truths true is not the story of what the various aspects of the nature of those TMKs are. That is another story altogether. Truths about tomatoes are made true by tomatoes, whatever their nature is and whatever the deep story about them turns out to be.⁴¹ Of course tomatoes need to have the natures that they have to be the TMKs for truths about them. And obviously the story of their nature, which may well be given by fundamental physics (though this is also somewhat controversial as tomatoes are fruits, and fruits are not normally taken to be part of fundamental physics), is interesting and illuminating.

But (1) it seems somewhat improbable that truthmaking provides such a story. For it is, rather, the investigation of the extremely varied relations between ordinary things and other things to which they are related, for example by essential dependence or supervenience, which provides that *metaphysically substantial* story. These are all further facts about the TMKs that can be articulated by other truths and hence can be made

⁴¹One might wonder, "What if we are dealing with kinds that disappear upon close inspection? What implications does this have for how seriously we should take ordinary talk, for instance, about tomatoes?" My general response to this is that we should take ordinary talk seriously in so far as it takes its commitments to how things are in reality seriously. (I say more on this in §6 and §7, in my discussions of cheaters and realism, respectively. See especially §6.5.) If what is meant by 'kinds that disappear upon close inspection' is that these kinds do not exist (and that we happen only to know this upon close inspection), then our attempts to speak truly and positively *about* them cannot be satisfied or succeed. Of course, there can be satisfaction in terms of truth and aboutness, if we are speaking *negatively about* them, for instance, by claiming that they do not exist (see §3). If what is meant is that they exist but that they disappear upon close inspection, perhaps, because they are not fundamentalia, then we can say true positive things about them even if they do disappear. In that sense, we should take talk about them seriously. Truths about tomatoes are made true by tomatoes, as long as tomatoes are real, and even if they are not fundamental. Further, TBRs such as 'There are no hobbits' is *about* hobbits in the sense relevant to TT (though, such TBRs are also about hobbits in senses not relevant to TT; see §2.4.1 and §2.4.2.7). One might wonder what that sense is. To find out, see especially §2.4. The answer, in short, is that the TBR is, in part, *strictly about* hobbits (see §2.4.2.3). But, the TBR is *fully about* there not being any hobbits. Since hobbits don't exist, and there are no hobbits, the TBR is true. There is the appropriate kind of satisfaction in this case, even though (and appropriately) there is nothing, no TMKs, to satisfy the TBR either in terms of truth or aboutness (see §3.4). By contrast, 'There are hobbits' is false because there is no appropriate aboutness-satisfaction. This contrasts with TBRs about tomatoes because, presumably, tomatoes do exist (even if they disappear upon close inspection, in the sense that they are not fundamental). TBRs such as 'Tomatoes exist' are true and made true by tomatoes. TBRs such as 'Tomatoes do not exist' are false. Thanks to my internal examiner for pressing me on this in her report, and for giving me the opportunity to address these issues, both of which she raised directly in regard to this sentence.

true by other features of reality, such as for instance the facts (if there are any) involving the metaphysical relations that ordinary objects such as tomatoes have with other objects such as quarks and muons.

And (2), even if it is true that fundamental physics, or whatever turns out to be the “fundamental” science, gives us the *deep story* of the world, it is very doubtful that the story put in the language of fundamental physics (or whatever other fundamental science) will give us the *full story* of the world.⁴² In particular, it is doubtful that it will give the full story which adequately describes the *ontologically important* features of the world, such as the relations *essential dependence*, *modal dependence*, *constitution*, *supervenience*, and *instantiation*. These relations relate what we might call *fundamental* entities with *non-fundamental* entities, and *fundamental* modes of being with *non-fundamental* modes of being (as well as relating fundamentalia with other fundamentalia and non-fundamentalia with other non-fundamentalia). Even if fundamentalists are right that such a distinction between entities can be made,⁴³ the very fact that those philosophically and ontologically important relations relate both fundamental entities and non-fundamental entities means that non-fundamental entities must be an important part of the story of ontology and metaphysics.

5.4.2.2 Problem 2: *What Grounds TBRs About Grounding?*

The preceding worry is related to the worry raised by Bliss and Trogdon (2014: §7). Bliss and Trogdon ask “What, if anything, grounds the facts about what grounds what?” (ibid.). Let’s say it is true that facts concerning the July 2015 London Tube workers’ labour strike *are grounded* in the more fundamental facts concerning the workers’ refusal to work, facts concerning their acting on their interests to have better control over their working hours, facts concerning how the trains are (namely, standing still), etc. Let’s call the more fundamental facts WORKERS, the less fundamental facts STRIKES, and the fact that STRIKES is grounded in WORKERS: GROUNDS. The question is: what grounds GROUNDS?

There is a clear analogy with my criticism of Heil here. If Heil thinks that TBRs concerning non-fundamentals is made true by fundamentals, what makes true TBRs concerning how fundamentals are related to non-fundamentals? Presumably, according to Heil’s TF, the TMK for GROUNDS must be something that’s fundamental and thereby

⁴²See (Chalmers 2012) for an extensive discussion, but see especially (ibid.: §6) where he discusses the so-called “hard cases” (ibid.: 259–311) including the hard case of intentionality (ibid.: 274ff).

⁴³See (Wilson 2014) for arguments against the very notion of *grounding*. Her overall argument is that grounding does no real work in illuminating metaphysical dependence and that ultimately there is no need for it. If what she argues is right, then I think one can conclude that there is no real distinction between grounded and ungrounded entities, that is, there are no distinct fundamental entities. See also (Sider 2012: especially §8) which argues that grounding-theoretic proposals cannot provide an account of the correct and full fundamental description of the world without mentioning non-fundamentals. Also, see (Daly 2012: 81ff) who thinks that grounding is incoherent and that we cannot coherently understand the notion of grounding.

doesn't include STRIKES.⁴⁴ But then it also doesn't include the G-REL relating STRIKES to WORKERS. And it cannot be just WORKERS which ground GROUNDS because no facts contained in WORKERS can tell us and explain anything about how WORKERS is related to STRIKES or anything else non-fundamental. Grounding is supposed to be somewhat informative and explanatory.⁴⁵ But this option seems unable to account for GROUNDS informatively.⁴⁶

Another option would be to say that GROUNDS is grounded in a fundamental fact which as Bliss and Trogon describe it "speaks directly to the connection between [WORKERS] and [STRIKES]" (ibid.). This strategy⁴⁷ might go something like this: it is in *the nature of being a strike* that if WORKERS, then STRIKES is grounded in WORKERS, and this fact about the nature of STRIKES (call it ESSENCE) in conjunction with WORKERS grounds GROUNDS.

In response, Bliss and Trogon (ibid.: §5) raise the worry that it is unclear what grounds ESSENCE. They concede, however, that the conjunction of ESSENCE and WORKERS can ground GROUNDS without involving STRIKES. It is unclear to me that this is the case however, for surely ESSENCE, which is just a fact about the nature of STRIKES, involves STRIKES somehow. It is, overall, very problematic how TBRs about what grounds what can be made true by anything purely fundamental, let alone be grounded in anything purely fundamental. If this is already a problem for TBRs about grounding relations, it is even clearer that there are still more problems for TBRs about how fundamentals are related to non-fundamentals with non-grounding relations, such as *instantiation* or *similarity*. This is, I think, a deep worry for any account of TF, and not just Heil's specific account.

5.4.2.3 Problem 3: *Fundamental Physics Doesn't Capture Metaphysical Relations*

Also, remember that Heil's specific account holds that the ultimate story, the story of TMKs, is to be given by the ultimate story given by *fundamental physics*. However, it is no part of the story of *fundamental physics* to account for *metaphysical relations*. Modal notions such as supervenience and essential dependence, plausibly, are not part of the

⁴⁴This is analogous to the general worry raised for grounding theorists. Presumably, all grounding-theorists believe that the correct fundamental description of the world won't mention or be about STRIKES (let's assume that WORKERS are fundamental facts), and that all facts concerning STRIKES are grounded in facts not concerning STRIKES but concerning fundamental things (e.g. WORKERS). If one thinks that GROUNDS is ungrounded, then there is a fact concerning STRIKES which is not grounded in anything. This is clearly problematic for the grounding theorist (see [Sider 2012: §8], and [deRosset 2013] for further discussion of this point from [Bliss and Trogon ibid.]).

⁴⁵See (Bliss and Trogon 2014: §4) for a discussion of why grounding involves a distinctive form of explanation.

⁴⁶Though see (deRosset 2013) for an attempt to resolve this explanatory problem for explaining GROUNDS solely in terms of WORKERS, in the context of the overall grounding project.

⁴⁷This is the strategy taken by (Fine 2012) and (Rosen 2010) in the context of the general grounding debate.

language of fundamental physics, but are rather part of the important *but separate* study of metaphysics and ontology. Heil is therefore wrong to equate the study of ontology with the study of TMKs only conceived of as fundamental relations or entities. Thus, it seems that Heil's notion of truthmaking as a fundamentalist enterprise is grounded in an inadequate and uncomprehensive notion of ontology and does not clearly set out a coherent notion of truthmaking which captures the idea that truths are made true in virtue of the world as it is described. Since the entities, relations, properties, etc., posited by fundamental physics surely cannot properly account for or ground metaphysical relations and facts concerning, for instance, relations such as grounding, this story of the TMKs won't be able to give the TMK-story for a whole swathe of truths that surely need to be accounted for somehow by TT.⁴⁸

Overall, without endorsing something like TAAT, I do not see how one can properly make sense of the importance of philosophy, and in particular of ontology and the philosophy of language to guide us in understanding the world. TAAT allows that the truths of ontology and the truths of philosophy of language (and other parts of philosophy) are made true by what these truths are about. TF requires that they are made true by fundamental reality, but many of these truths, and the things they are about, do not have a clear relation to anything in fundamental reality, especially not if fundamental reality is construed as *that which is described by fundamental physics*. By conflating T-REL with G-REL or construing it as a relation that relates truths only with what is fundamental, there is a danger of making philosophy, and especially the fields of ontology and metaphysics, both important branches of philosophy, too narrow to be useful.

5.5 The Aboutness Objection against TF

Throughout this chapter, I presented many objections both for general characterisations of TF and for specific versions of TF. These objections all either rest on the plausibility or intuitive appeal of TAAT or raise worries for TF that are easily solved by TAAT. Now, I shall sum up my problems for TF as the Aboutness Objection. The crux of the objection is that TF-ists seem to be denying a truism about truth and about its relation to reality: that things must be the way they are said to be for what is said to be true.

When we are talking about the world, we are sometimes talking about fundamental things and sometimes we are not (e.g. sometimes we are using the language of fundamental physics and sometimes we are not). But what makes true what we say has to be what we are talking about, not other things to which what we are talking about might be related. Understanding these further relations is an important part of the contribution to knowledge that ontology makes,⁴⁹ but those relations are importantly not the subject

⁴⁸Of course, one can reject metaphysics and metaphysical truths altogether, but this is not an option for Heil or any TF-ist.

⁴⁹In the previous chapter I was not denying that ontology and metaphysics are important areas of

matter of TT. The subject matter of TT is the relation that usually relates semantic entities to non-semantic entities, while those ontological relations usually relate non-semantic entities with other non-semantic entities. Against an anti-realist who wields an epistemic conception of TMKs, we might say analogously that it is important to keep apart what we are talking about when we are talking about non-epistemic features of the world and the epistemic facts that might be related to those non-epistemic features, such as our evidence for them.⁵⁰ This is important when we try to use TT to help us understand the world more fully. It is of central importance not to conflate distinct notions, on pain of causing confusion and impeding the pursuit of truth and misunderstanding its role in philosophical and scientific inquiry.

5.6 SAC vs TF: *On Cheater Catching*

In §2.4.2.52.4.2.7, I discussed several of Schaffer's (2008a and 2010a) objections against TAAT. The final objection that Schaffer (2008a: 314–316) raises to TAAT is basically that TGro can do better at catching cheaters. This is clearly not the case when we see that what Schaffer means by catching cheaters is what we might call the “weak sense of cheater catching” (WEAK-CC), which I shall elaborate on extensively in the next chapter. According to WEAK-CC, all or most of the cheater catching work is done at the level of debating what the right ontology is, what is dubious, or in Schaffer's case, what is and what isn't fundamental. This is a weaker sense of cheater catching because, in fact, as Cameron (2008c: 115–116) among others has argued, it only pinpoints the sense of cheater catching in which TT plays a subsidiary role — it catches cheaters only with the help of further theories concerning the right ontology.⁵¹ A *stronger sense of cheater catching* (STRONG-CC) would allow TT-ists to catch cheaters without the help of additional commitments about what is in the right (or relevant) ontology. Schaffer in effect admits that TGro is restricted to the weaker sense when he writes:

Notice that TGro only catches cheaters in cooperation with a theory of fundamentality. TGro cannot do it alone. TGro only says that all truths must be grounded in what is fundamental, but it does not itself say what is fundamental (it takes no stand on Humeanism, for instance). So if there were, for instance, fundamental dispositional facts, then the Rylean would emerge innocent. What is ruled out are not dubious ontologies *per se*, but dubious *packages* of views about what is true plus views about what is fundamental. [ibid.: 314]

TGro's cheater catching power is clear: with a theory of fundamentality and with TGro,

philosophy and areas of knowledge. I was merely arguing that it is important for the TT-ist to have a metaphysically modest theory of TT.

⁵⁰In Appendix 5, I discuss this issue for anti-realism in more depth.

⁵¹MacBride (2014: §3.1) in fact argues that TT must be rejected and is undermotivated on the basis that all the real work of cheater catching (which is supposed to be one of the main motivations for TT) is done at the level of discussing what the right ontology is for independent, non-truthmaker reasons and not by any truthmaker principle.

Schaffer would be able to catch out lots of cheaters by looking at the potential TMKs for truths and alert the anti-cheater police that we have yet another TMK that is not fundamental. But as is clear from his remarks above, TGro cannot catch any cheaters on its own, or as I would add, TGro cannot catch any cheaters on its own unless it somehow also includes an aboutness requirement.

SAC can do a better job at catching cheaters, because it does not require any views about what is fundamental or what is in the right ontology. It catches out cheaters, for instance, who do not accept the TMK-commitments of what they say, or who claim that there are truths when they reject the view that those truths are about anything real. In fact, without having to bring in any further views about what constitutes the right ontology or what are dubious entities, and without appealing to or having any view about what is fundamental, we can conclude that advocates of TGro and TF are cheaters in the STRONG sense that I have been describing. This is because the TF-ists misunderstand the role of truth and truthmaking in that they do not accept that what truths are about is what must make them true; they neglect their TMK-commitments by focusing purely on what's fundamental.

I end on a constructive suggestion. Drop the idea that TGro (or any similar articulation of T-REL in terms of fundamentalist grounding) articulates *truthmaking* or that T-REL is a species of G-REL, and drop the idea that TGro helps us account for what in virtue of which truths are true. TGro-plus-fundamentality constitutes an attractive way to catch cheaters of a different sort: ones that get the grounding relations between TMKs wrong. They should drop talking about truth and truthmaking and stick to talking about grounding and fundamentality, which I'm sure is a perfectly clear and useful way of articulating certain important relations between entities in the world. I would suggest, however, that they use locutions such as 'x grounds y' to describe their findings, without requiring that the fact that x *grounds* y is a fundamental constituent of reality for such locutions to be true.⁵² Sometimes we talk about grounding and fundamentality, and sometimes we don't. And an adequate notion of truth and truthmaking should be able to capture that. If grounding and fundamentality encroaches upon and subsumes TT, as I have argued, nothing but confusion arises. So, we should reject TF and accept that whatever else may be true about T-REL, TBRs are true as long as things are the way they are described to be.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

I hope to have persuasively argued in this chapter that T-REL is not best understood as a species of (fundamentalist) grounding and that T-REL does not always relate fundamental with non-fundamental entities. Rather, the better way to understand T-REL is as the relation that relates TBRs, when they are true (and when they are positive), to

⁵²See §5.4.2.2 above.

the entities (and the ways those entities are) which they are strictly and fully about.

My rejection of TF (and T-NEC before) constitutes a strong case that any *meta-physically substantial* account of TT does not fulfill the more modest aims of TT, *viz.* to capture the relation between truths and reality in a coherent and modest way.

I think that my preferred account, TAAT in terms of SAC, paves the way for such a modest account. The aim of the rest of the dissertation is to argue in three relatively short chapters that SAC can give us a more modest understanding of cheater catching (§6), of the kind of (modest) realism attached to TT (§7), and of everyday inquiry (§8).

Chapter 6

Truthmaking and Cheater Catching *Deflated*

6.1 Introduction: *TT's Cheater Catching Power*

Cheater catching (CC-ing) has come to be understood as the activity of identifying and undermining theories underpinned by what Sider, who first employed the language of “cheating” (2001: 37–41), calls “dubious ontologies” (ibid.: 36). Sider writes, “The point of the truth-maker principle and the principle that truth supervenes on being^[1] is to rule out dubious ontologies” (ibid.: 40). This view about the task or application of TT² has many subscribers and some think that the whole point of TT is to set up a framework to catch cheaters. Merricks (2007), who rejects TT on the basis of its ultimate failure in this regard, writes, “Catching cheaters is a principal motivation for Truthmaker” (ibid: 36). Liggins usefully lists a few of these dubious ontological theories, the supposed cheaters: “[Truthmaker principles] also provide arguments against phenomenalism, Ryleanism about dispositions, Rylean behaviourism, operationalism, presentism, and other philosophical theories” (2008: 177).

I argue that CC-ing as it is normally understood by the immodest TT-ists cannot motivate TT, because it merely *begs the question* against the views, the unsavoury cheater theories (CHEATERS), it aims to undermine. To argue against any of the theories which Liggins lists and which TT has famously been used to undermine via CC-ing, TT-ists implicitly assume a metaphysical view which is incompatible with the views they are undermining. In each case, this additional metaphysics is not part of TT, but

¹As I mentioned before, the thesis that truth supervenes on being, which was first articulated by Bigelow (1988: 132) and further developed and defended by Lewis (2003), is generally accepted to be a version of TT. My favoured view is best understood as a variant, though I reject talk of *supervenience* for talk of *dependence* in this context for concerns to do with asymmetry. See §4.1.2, where I have my most extensive discussion of supervenience theses. Remember, my view is that truth depends not just on what things are, but how things are with what things are. Since the cheaters mainly talk about *entities*, I shall present and discuss their views in this way, but keep in mind my alternative, favoured understanding of these matters.

²I prefer to use the terms ‘application’, ‘use’, or ‘task’ rather than ‘motivation’. That TT can be put to some use in itself does not give TT any support. I aim to stay neutral about whether its uses motivate TT, since otherwise I would need to address the TT-skeptic. Instead, I argue that the right view of the tasks of TT should be much more modest than they have been claimed to be by TT-ists.

is rather metaphysical baggage which the TT-ists bring to TT to do the metaphysical work they think it does. A dilemma arises. On the one hand, TT's CC-ing power is question-begging. On the other, if a TT-ist concedes this to the skeptic, TT becomes undermotivated.

The root of the problem is an underlying commitment of the normal understanding of TT and CC-ing to metaphysical immodesty. To salvage TT, I suggest that we completely deflate and overhaul the enterprise of CC-ing by eliminating metaphysical theses from TT, making TT metaphysically much more modest. A *metaphysically modest version* of TT, such as TAAT (see §4), can articulate the real, but very much limited CC-ing work that TT can be put to in this regard. Further, I make a distinction between WEAK-CC and STRONG-CC, explaining that the motivation for TT can only lie in STRONG-CC, that it must catch cheaters *by itself* and not with the aid of additional metaphysical theories.³ As a result, TT is not out to catch spurious metaphysical theories, but to catch immodest *semantic theories*, of which there are, generally, two main types:

- (1) **EXTRAVAGANT CHEATERS:** CHEATERS who build *too many* metaphysical commitments into semantics;
- (2) **SHY CHEATERS:** CHEATERS who do not accept the *modest* commitments required of TT; minimally, if one's theory accepts TBRs as true, then what the TBRs are about must be *how things are in the world* and *how they are described to be*.

I end this chapter by considering an objection and reflecting on the relation between Maximalism (T-M) and CC-ing.

6.2 Is the Charge of CC-ing Against Theory X Merely Begging the Question Against Theory X?

Beebe and Dodd raise powerful worries against the motivation for TT when they write:

Suppose that some formulation of [TT] does indeed succeed in capturing realist intuitions. The question arises, how can [TT] now legitimately be put to use in an argument *for* realism (about a particular domain) and *against* anti-realism? If [TT] itself enshrines a commitment to realism, then presumably the appropriate anti-realist reaction to such an argument is simply to deny whatever [TMK] principle is being used as a premise in that argument. If a given [TMK] principle is to pull its weight in arguments against anti-realism, then we had better have reasons, independently of our commitment to realism for believing that the principle is true. We wonder whether such reasons are to be had. [2005a: 16]

³I repeat, whether this gives TT sufficient motivation to address the skeptic is *not* my concern.

I think that this argument can be read as a powerful, *general* argument also against TT's CC-ing power.⁴ In effect, any attempt by the TT-ist to catch supposed cheaters, for example anti-realists who deny the reality of entities of a certain domain, will be question-begging: when confronted with the charge that she is cheating, the anti-realist can just deny that the TMK-principle that the realist wields is the right TMK-principle. If the realist has no independent reasons for thinking that the version of the TMK-principle that she wields is the right one, then she is clearly begging the question against the anti-realist.

For instance, the anti-presentist's use of the CC-argument illustrates the point I want to draw from Beebee and Dodd's argument.⁵ An anti-presentist⁶, who denies that only present entities exist *simpliciter*, relies on the rule that truths, including truths about the past and the future, need to be made true by entities which exist *simpliciter*. However, without even having to deny BATT or TT at all, the presentist can just deny that truths need to be made true by entities which exist *simpliciter*. She can just reply that truths about the future or the past are made true by the things that will exist in the future and did exist in the past, but don't exist *simpliciter*. Or even better, they can reply that such truths merely need to be made true by how things are in the future or the past when they happen or happened. This does not require there to be any things from the past or the future which presently exist *simpliciter*. They nonetheless can play the *modest* TMK-role.

Merricks (2007: 36) discusses the Lucretian presentist⁷ and Sider (2001: 36–37) discusses Bigelow (1996: especially 46ff) both of whom reply to the anti-presentist TMK-challenge by claiming that there *presently exist* SOAs such as the SOA *the universe being such that the Trojans were conquered* and the SOA *the universe being such that Caesar was stabbed to death*. These present SOAs are meant to make true corresponding TBRs about the past, such as 'The Trojans were conquered' and 'Caesar was stabbed

⁴I shall address the more general point concerning *realism/anti-realism* in §7.

⁵Liggins reads Beebee and Dodd's (2005a: 16) argument similarly as I do. However, he offers an argument against Beebee and Dodd's (ibid.) argument, the general gist of which I shall address and defend against Liggins in my discussion below. Liggins (see especially [2008: 183–185]) thinks that Beebee and Dodd conflate different notions of "realism" in their discussion; specifically, according to him, they conflate what he calls "physical object realism" with "commonsense realism" (see [ibid.: 184] for the distinction). For this reason, he claims that the TT-ists' arguments "do not beg the question" (ibid.), despite Beebee and Dodd's implication that they do. As we shall see, I argue in this chapter that TT-ists do beg the question. And, I argue in the next chapter that TT-ists should be modest realists, which is similar to Liggins's "commonsense realist." However, I disagree with his statement that TT-ists *are* commonsense realists. Instead I argue that they *should* be commonsense realists in his sense. In this way, Beebee and Dodd's charge, which both Liggins and I sum up as saying that the TT-ist is begging the question, indeed does hold against most TT-ists, who are neither commonsense realists (in Liggins's terminology) nor modest realists (in mine; see the next chapter).

⁶See for instance Sider (2001: 11–52) who argues against presentism, in particular the presentism of Bigelow (1996: 35–52). See Keller (2004: 85–102, especially 93–102) who argues against three types of what he calls "truthmaker-preserving presentism" (ibid.: 96).

⁷See (Lucretius 1994: 21) and (Merricks 2007: 36). Bigelow (1996: 44–47) discusses Lucretius's presentism, a modification of which (see [ibid.: 46]) constitutes his own theory.

to death' respectively. Such SOAs would presumably meet the challenge raised by the anti-presentist TT-ist.

However, Sider (2001: 39–40) thinks that this response is a paradigm case of CHEATERS positing *brute tensed facts*. Also Merricks explains that TT “will be unable to catch cheaters unless it keeps these properties from playing a role in truthmaking, [...] and [...] is of interest [...] largely because it threatens to rule out this or that philosophical theory” (2007: 36). Thus, Merricks argues that not only should TT-ists insist that an ontological basis needs to be given for truths, but that certain *ontological positions* or *theories* need to already be ruled out as part of TT. He goes on to say:

Let Truthmaker [i.e. TT] say that truthmakers cannot be constituted by ‘suspicious properties’. Moreover, let a fully articulated Truthmaker tell us which properties really are suspicious. Now we can resist suspect attempts to accommodate Truthmaker. For example, we can block the above defence of (2) by deeming to be suspicious the property of *being such that, had she [i.e. Queen Elizabeth] been born 400 years ago in Japan, she would have been a samurai warrior*. [ibid.: 36]

What Merricks is arguing here is that it should be *part of* TT that it contains a rejection of *suspicious properties*. Thus, once TT is fully articulated, we can reject all suspicious properties. His main arguments throughout his book consist in showing how such an account of the dependence of truth on reality is not possible, that it cannot rule out various suspicious properties, and that thereby, TT is not successful and under motivated.

However, without getting into further details about Merricks’s discussion, I want to present a general problem from the discussion. I think that it is precisely this aspect of Merricks’s understanding of TT and the CC-ing role it needs to play which has led theorists astray as to how TT can catch cheaters. Demanding that TT-ists give a *full metaphysically substantial account of the nature of* TMKs is not just a mistake, but makes TT open to the charge of being unmotivated and being put to *obviously question-begging* purposes. I think that it is plausible to say that this interpretation of CC-ing has caused a lot of undue skepticism about the motivation and plausibility of TT.

On Merricks’s construal of TT, the TT-ist is clearly just *begging the question* when she uses her principle in the way Merricks describes it against certain anti-realist or eliminativist views such as presentism, phenomenalism, and behaviourism. However, Merricks’s criticism of TT on this basis is not a straw man argument. This is because his story is the natural reading of what traditional TT-ists themselves say, and it is the most common reading of CC-ing and the role of TT in ontological debates. For example, see Bigelow’s famous statement:

I have sometimes tried to stop believing in the Truthmaker axiom. Yet I have never really succeeded. Without some such axiom, I find I have no adequate anchor to hold me from drifting onto the shoals of some sort of pragmatism or idealism. And that is altogether uncongenial to me; I am a congenital realist about almost everything. [1988: 123]

One naturally reads what Bigelow says here as drawing a strong link between being realist (about a domain) and being a TT-ist (concerning that domain). In fact, he seems to imply that for one to be a realist, one must be (or at least one should be inclined to be, from birth or otherwise) a TT-ist.

Martin, also one of the very earliest TT-ists,⁸ is the one who famously used TT in arguments against phenomenalism (see Armstrong 2004: 1–2) and Ryleanism about dispositions (see his [1994: 18–19]), and against Dummettian anti-realism (see [1984]). Martin's original charge, however, was not meant to be *knock-down* against such views, but merely an attempt for those theories to *own up to the task of providing an account of TMKs* when such theorists as Ryle, in the philosophical climate of their time, had no inclination to do so. Seen in the light of Martin's original worry, CC-ing is not presenting a knock-down argument, but a demand for what he later called *ontological seriousness*, which read charitably is little more than a demand for further explanation.⁹

It seems to me that TT-ists have taken inspiration from statements from early TT-ists such as Bigelow and Martin and have built into TT a commitment to *substantial metaphysical theses*. This jump to substantive metaphysics is what Lewis (1992: 217) has called a clear “over-reaction” to what are undoubtedly flaws in theories (such as Ryleanism and phenomenalism) as they were presented at the time.¹⁰ For example, Sider (2001: 11–52) seems to use the principle as support for his realism about the future and the past. However, as I argued in §1.6, pragmatists can be TT-ists. It is clear that even radical forms of idealism are compatible with TT.¹¹ Such theories are compatible with BATT. A pragmatist version of TT might hold that TBRs are made true by what is expedient to the subject. An idealist version of TT might hold that TBRs are made true by ideas. *Going beyond BATT* merely by infusing into TT extra metaphysical commitments, and then accusing those who do not go beyond BATT in the same way as

⁸See his (1984) but also before; Armstrong (2004: 1) and Heil (2003: 61) trace Martin's influence and defence of TT to the late 1950s.

⁹See (Heil and Martin 1999: 34ff). For instance, they criticise Linguisticism, on which “talk of states of mind [...] is replaced by talk of mental attributions; talk of properties is replaced by talk of predicates” (ibid.: 36), for “diverting attention and postponing the hard [ontological] questions” (ibid.). Although I sympathise with Martin, I deny that the hard questions should be answered by giving a *theory of TMKs*. Thinking otherwise postpones the hard ontological work further. Compare (ibid.: 35).

¹⁰For Martin, the target Rylean is Ryle (1949) and the target phenomenalist is usually Ayer (1954a), who clearly worked in a time when philosophers did not see the need for further explanation, let alone *explanations of any metaphysical substance*. Also, even Heil and Martin emphasise that they “do not claim that every form of antirealism is defective. [...] Our suggestion is that much can be learned by pressing antirealists to make their ontology explicit. The strategy forces discussion back down to earth” (1999: 35–36). They clearly do not deny that different forms of antirealism *can* give an account of TT or TMKs. Their aim is to force antirealists to stop neglecting the need to do so.

¹¹See also Dodd (2002a: 83–84) and Daly (2005: 95–97) who make similar points concerning the compatibility of TT and idealism. MacBride, who calls Gustav Bergmann the “grandfather of the contemporary truth-maker movement” (2014: §3.1), presents a noteworthy quotation from Bergmann making a similar point again: “the truth of *S* must be grounded ontologically. On this first move idealists and realists agree” (1961: 229). Fumerton (2002: 5–6) points out that TT and alethic realism are compatible with “radical metaphysical idealism” (ibid.: 6). Fumerton (2013: 200) also points out that even Berkeley (1713) was “a robust realist” about truth while holding the view that “the only truth makers for Berkeley were facts about minds and ideas” (ibid.).

cheaters, is obviously question-begging, against the pragmatist, idealist, or anyone else. CC-ing, understood in the metaphysically substantial way, has no bite at all.

The upshot of this discussion is that it is now unclear what a plausible notion of CC-ing is. If CC-ing is to motivate TT or any version of TT, at the very least, it must be clear about what kind of theory it is catching as cheating and explain how such theories are cheating in a non-question-begging way.

6.3 Eliminating Metaphysical Theory From TT

My argument against CC-ing, as understood by both TT-ists and TT-skeptics, is basically that the charge of CC-ing wielded by most TT-ists is faced with a dilemma. They infuse TT with substantial metaphysical commitments that have no place in TT. The first horn is that *without* a good, independent reason to adopt the metaphysically substantial version, the TT-ist is begging the question against the view they are charging with cheating. The second horn is that *with* a good, independent reason to adopt the metaphysically substantial version, TT loses its cheater-*catching* power because what does the real work is the reason to adopt the metaphysically substantial commitment, not any commitment to TT.

I see no way out of the dilemma except to completely *revise* and *overhaul* the enterprise of CC-ing. Before I do this, I want to point out, in this section, that other critics and even at least one TT-ist seems to agree with my diagnosis, though they differ in what they think is the appropriate reaction. TT is a perfectly respectable theory that posits a certain relation between truth and reality. It needs a clean bill of health, and this can, in my view, only be accomplished by eliminating the metaphysically substantial elements of the contemporary versions of TT.

The point that we can draw from the way that I presented Merricks's discussion of the Lucretian presentist is that TT cannot catch the presentist as a cheater unless he builds into TT metaphysical commitments as to what is ontologically spurious and what is not. Merricks is not alone in arguing *against* TT by undermining its CC-ing power. For instance, MacBride writes,

The demand for truth-makers doesn't help "catch cheaters" at all. [...] Whatever we find lacking in theories that posit such items [e.g. *brute facts* about unobservables, dispositions, the future, or the past], it isn't that they fail to provide truth-makers, because they do [provide TMKs]. [2014: §3.1]

Here MacBride is clearly subscribing to my criticism of CC-ing. Both the phenomenalist and the non-phenomenalist can be TT-ists. He goes further, however, and makes a different point, on the basis of which he tries to *undermine* TT itself:

Of course if we are already committed to the need for truth makers then we will likely conceive of the demand for them as, e.g., drawing the phenomenalist out into the open to reveal the unfitness of their explanatory posits.

But unless we already have independent reasons for recognising the demand for truth makers, catching cheaters cannot provide a motivation for positing them. [ibid.]

Essentially, MacBride is arguing in this passage¹² that it is not TT that catches cheaters, but other commitments concerning what counts as a sound or fit explanation of what exists. He cites Horwich in this regard, who writes:

[A]gain it is perfectly possible to formulate these criticisms without any truth-making rhetoric. To the hard-line behaviourist one can point out that his hard line has been crossed. In response to the liberal, one can claim that dispositional facts cannot be explanatorily fundamental. As before, it's not so clear that this is right; but what is clear is that, if it is right, it stems from our view of constitutive explanation. Truth-maker theory merely offers a dressed-up way of putting the point. [2009: 197]

For Horwich and MacBride following him, TT doesn't catch cheaters; the need for a savoury explanation of why certain kinds of truths are true is what does the main critical work. I think that this is exactly right on the conventional way of understanding CC-ing. They are right to explain that CC-ing in these cases is done purely at the level of explanation, not at the level of TT's demand for TMKs. However, I think that MacBride's argument in the passage above against TT rests on the same mistake as Merricks's argument. As I hope to have made clear so far, the traditional understanding of TT as CC-ing rests on the mistake that CHEATERS are unsavoury metaphysical theses or unsavoury explanatory accounts of phenomena. The TT-arguments against such views are *question-begging*.

However, I think that the right view of TT is not as a substantial metaphysical or substantial explanatory thesis. A TT-ist qua TT-ist should not rely on *arguments independent of* TT to argue on the basis of TT that some putative TMK for some TBR is unsavoury or explanatorily unfit. Arguments from metaphysics and ontology concerning what is savoury and what is not can be kept separate from TT. One might call philosophers who wield such arguments the unsavoury metaphysics police.

TT-ists, by contrast, can only catch cheaters who don't see any need for positing TMKs at all¹³ (we called them the SHY CHEATERS in §6.1), or those cheaters who posit too much metaphysics into their TMKs (the IMMODEST CHEATERS). One might call the TT-ist-cheater-catchers the unsavoury semantics police.

¹²Actually, I write here what I take to be the right charitable reading of what he says. The last sentence of the paragraph I quote from MacBride seems to imply that once you have an independent reason for positing TMKs and hence ruling out certain ontologies and explanations, catching cheaters becomes a motivation. I am reading him to say the opposite—that catching cheaters is no longer a motivation for TT because independent reasons do the real work. From what he says in the rest of the passage, he obviously means the latter.

¹³Remember, I'm understanding TMKs broadly in a sense of *being as how things are*, not just *whether things are*; see §4.1.

Of course, MacBride is right that CC-ing cannot motivate TT. TT must be made plausible against the TT-skeptic for, as he says, *independent reasons* to CC-ing. But, once we establish these *independent reasons* (which, remember, is not the aim of this dissertation) we have a clear *task* for the TT-ist: catch out those theories which posit *no* TMKs for (positive) truths about how things are with things and hence have a *faulty semantics*. These are the CHEATERS. Any TT-ist who goes beyond this is *begging the question* against the metaphysical views that they wish to undermine. Hard metaphysical work cannot be replaced by what is essentially a semantic theory with no *substantial* metaphysical consequences. TT-ists who infuse metaphysical substance into TT and use this against other theories, calling this “CC-ing,” present reasoning and motivation for TT, which, as Schaffer wrongly called Merricks’s AC strategy, is a real “poisoned pawn” (2008a: 304).

In response, one might consider Cameron (2008c). He makes a similar point to the one MacBride and Horwich are making about what does the CC-ing work, but unlike the TT-skeptics and unlike the TT-revisionists such as I am, he does not think that TT should be rejected on this basis. He clearly agrees that it is not TT but rather other prior commitments concerning what should count as a non-dubious ontological theory that does most of the work of CC-ing. He writes:

I agree that the truthmaker principle on its own won’t rule out these dubious ontologies. But neither will the principle that delimits the kinds of things it is acceptable to believe in: you’re not going to be able to object to the presentist that her ontological commitments are unacceptable if she simply denies that she has any ontological commitments. I see both principles as working in tandem, to catch the dubious ontologists in a *pincer movement*. We need a principle that forces them to accept that, say, <there were dinosaurs> is *ontologically committing—that is the truthmaker principle*—and we need a principle that restricts what those ontological commitments can be. Neither principle will force them away from the position on its own, but together they will. [...] So the truthmaker principle does indeed do serious work in the battle against dubious ontologies such as presentism, phenomenalism and Rylean behaviourism. It just doesn’t do it on its own; but that shouldn’t count against it. And so, insofar as we have the intuition that this is good work to be done—insofar as we have the intuition that there is something in common wrong with these three positions—this should count as justification for the truthmaker principle. [ibid.: 115–116; my emphases]

Let’s clarify Cameron’s stance here. In response to the TT-skeptic and TT-revisionist, Cameron’s move is two-fold: (1) he claims that TT forces the dubious ontologists to accept that certain TBRs are ontologically committing, playing one part of a “pincer movement,” the other part being the ontological theory that rules out the dubious ontology; and (2) he claims that TT is justified because “we have the intuition that there is something in common wrong with these [...] positions” (ibid.) and however small the role that TT plays in undermining these theories, it does help to undermine them. What

Cameron argues here is that TT cannot do the work of CC-ing on its own. In other words, there is no motivation to think that presentism and behaviourism are wrong simply because of TT. We cannot undermine the theories just by claiming that the theories have to face up to their ontological commitments.¹⁴ Rather, other commitments about what counts as not just suspicious but dubious theories do the work of undermining the theories once they are forced to develop their ontological picture. So, to catch cheaters, we also need a story about what counts as an acceptable ontological commitment.

However, and here is the reason why he thinks that CC justifies and motivates TT: TT is a *necessary part* of the *pincer movement* because the ontological work of showing why some views have unsavoury ontological commitments is *not sufficient* since the CHEATER can deny that her theory has *any ontological commitments*. TT's role has to do with what MacBride describes as "drawing the [CHEATER] out into the open to reveal the unfitness of their explanatory [and ontological] posits" [2014: §3.1] by forcing the cheater to give an account of her ontological commitments.

Cameron underestimates the problem that he has presented. Why should TT come into play *at all* in undermining these theories? As we saw, the presentist can accept TT and will happily give an account of the TMKs for the truths about the past and the future which *she* accepts. If the TMKs that the presentist posits are spurious or metaphysically unacceptable, surely this will be decided on independent metaphysical grounds, not on TT grounds. Similarly, the behaviourist can just accept TT and will merely posit dispositions (brute or otherwise) to make true the behavioural conditionals with which she paraphrases mental-talk. Neither the behaviourist nor the presentist is *forced* to account for *truths* which would otherwise remain ungrounded. If the TMKs she provides are inadequate and unsavoury, this can *only* be established with reasons independent to TT. They are not inadequate or unsavoury *qua* TMKs or from the TT-perspective. It is important to remember that presentism, phenomenalism, and any plausible form of behaviourism are *metaphysical theses*.¹⁵ Thus, they must present an account of the *metaphysics* of time (qua presentist), of everything including-ordinary-objects (qua phenomenalist), and of mental entities (qua behaviourist), respectively. To undermine such theories one must engage in serious metaphysical debate. If a version of presentism, or phenomenalism, or behaviourism, happens also to present their theory in a way that reveals faulty *semantics* and make claims for which they see no need to posit TMKs, that's when the TT-police come in and catch them out. But the important point is that it is not *essential* to any of these theories that they have such a faulty semantics. The metaphysical theories themselves are not CHEATERS and are not susceptible to any pincer movement. Metaphysical theories must be undermined on metaphysical grounds. It is confused to think that TT can help do this important metaphysical work. It is only

¹⁴This part is in tune with what, as I pointed out in §6.2, Martin, one of the founding fathers of TT and from whose work the original arguments that are now called CC-ing stem, thinks is at the heart of his criticism of theories along TT-lines. Again, see Heil and Martin (1999: 34ff).

¹⁵This is what Heil and Martin (1999: 34ff) *strongly* press too.

necessary for catching out theories who do not face up to their ontological commitments. To think that these metaphysical theories traditionally branded as CHEATERS are CHEATERS on TT-grounds is to confuse semantics for metaphysics. Such *metaphysically immodest and extravagant* versions of TT, which cause this confusion, are the real poisoned pawns.

If TT is going to be at all motivated by CC-ing, then the enterprise of CC-ing must be re-imagined and TT must eliminate its association with and commitment to any particular substantial metaphysical theory.

6.4 WEAK-CC and STRONG-CC

As I have argued in the previous section, although Horwich, MacBride, and Cameron are right that TT cannot catch metaphysically substantial cheaters, their own criticisms of TT assume a false though currently very popular view of TT and the role of TT in CC-ing. The mistaken view of TT, which all of the critics and also defenders of TT seem to hold, is that TT is a *metaphysical* or *ontological* theory. The correct view, as I have sketched it so far is that TT is (1) merely a theory about the relation between truths and the reality they are about and is (2) a theory that is *pluralist* (§1.7) but in a metaphysically modest way (§4). As I am re-imagining it, TT is not an *ontological* theory, but rather a *semantic* theory. In this section, I give further support for my modest stance towards TT by sketching and contrasting two kinds of cheater arguments.

Of course, when coupled with good reasons to think that some theories are dubious or bad or unmotivated, one can use TT to develop *an argument* against such views (as we have done, for instance, against SOAs¹⁶ in §4). I shall set up such a candidate structure of argument and then pinpoint what my problems are with it before setting up an argument with a more direct structure. To read Cameron (2008c: 115f) charitably, the argument based on the so-called “pincer movement” might go something like this:

Cheater Argument 1:

(Premise 1) *Theory Y*: Theory Y claims that *p*, where *p* is some positive TBR.

(Premise 2) *Truthmaker*: If Theory Y claims that *p*, then Theory Y is committed to the TMKs of *p*.

(Premise 3) *Dubious Ontology*: The TMKs that would make true *p* according to Theory Y are dubious.

(Premise 4) *No Dubious Entity Principle*: If a theory is committed to dubious TMKs, then it is false.

(Conclusion) Theory Y is false.

¹⁶Remember, ‘SOAs’ abbreviates ‘states of affairs’.

I think that this is a perfectly reasonable argument using TMK-principles. Of course, as I illustrated above, the behaviourist and the presentist would deny premise 3 when this argument is wielded by the anti-behaviourist or the anti-presentist. In short, this is where the work lies when one wants to establish the substantial metaphysical conclusions TT-ists usually want to establish concerning dubious ontologies. But, overall, it is a perfectly reasonable and usable argument-structure.

However, by adding a view about what counts as a good explanation (as MacBride and Horwich do) or what counts as a dubious ontology (as Cameron and Merricks do), one is merely getting into another debate, a debate that TT doesn't need to get involved with. According to TT, as I see it, we must accept the commitments of our theories, and perhaps agree on them. After that, we need to figure out which of those theories are in fact true. As Alston poignantly states,

Just as we must not confuse the question of what virtue *is* with the question what virtues there are, as Socrates liked to remind us, we must not confuse the question of what truth *is* with the question what truths there are. [1996: 80; his emphases]^[17]

Similarly, TT can only give us a theory of the relation between truths and reality, not a theory of which TBRs are in fact true. It can tell us what we are committed to when we are committed to certain truths, but, generally, it does not tell us which theories are true.

Alston's comment above suggests an important additional thought: If TT determines the TMK-commitments of a given theory, how do we then determine whether the TBRs are true? Once we get the story of our TMK-commitments right (by figuring out what we're talking about), we appeal to evidence and further considerations to discover what is true, to discover whether things are the way they are described to be. Someone who is simply wrong about the right ontology is not cheating. She is just mistaken about what is true. For example, if phenomenalism is false because it posits a dubious ontology, then the phenomenalist is just mistaken about ontology and not necessarily cheating.

Another way is to determine *a priori* that the entities one is committed to cannot exist (and that things cannot be the way they are described). But it is a fundamental mistake to think that TT is an *ontological* theory giving *ontologists* powerful tools to catch cheaters with *a priori* reasoning alone. Their mistake is their *metaphysical immodesty*. And it is this which makes them vulnerable to the criticism of TT-skeptics such as Merricks, MacBride, and Horwich.¹⁸ I agree with these TT-skeptics that TT-ists should be caught out for building too many ontological assumptions, including about

¹⁷Yablo (2014: 45) and Fine (2015c: 12–13) make a parallel point when they profess to hold on to what Fine calls the *neutrality requirement*. See my §7.6 for further discussion of the limits of *neutrality*, and Appendix 6 for in-depth discussion of Alston and this quotation.

¹⁸As well as plenty of others, for example (Beebe and Dodd 2005a: 15–16). See also Liggins who argues that “[TMK] principles are useless for catching cheaters” (2008: 192).

what is dubious and what is not, into their view and for claiming that this is part of the right version of TT.¹⁹

Rather the *a priori* work TT does lies elsewhere, and can be drawn from just the basic, platitudinous insight that truths require the world to be the way it is described, especially when it is supplemented with the semantic details described by my favoured account TAAT. Unlike the *heavy-weight substantial metaphysical detail* that some TT-ists try to build into TT, the right *semantic detail* is clearly an appropriate part of any version of TT. This is because TT is essentially the enterprise of accounting for the *relation* between truth and reality. This requires neither a substantial account of the nature of *truth*, nor a substantial account of the nature of *reality*.²⁰

Overall, this generates a demand from anyone who uses truthmaking as a premise in their argument to *own up to their TMK-commitments* and, if there are any, *their ontological commitments*. And, this is something that a good version of TT can be used to do *on its own* and independently of any further ontological baggage. The ontological baggage contains claims beyond identifying one's TMK-commitments; it makes claims about which ontological claims are true and false. The right, *semantic* view of CC-ing is a demand of any theory, whether it is ontological or scientific, that it own up to its TMK-commitments; and this is something that can and should be demanded as long as the theory makes factual claims about the world. Thus, it can catch out cheaters by showing that a given theory is flouting its TMK-commitments or drawing unwarranted ontological conclusions from a faulty view about the relation between TBRs and reality. We extensively discussed this latter kind of (EXTRAVAGANT) CHEATER when we discussed those ontologists who claim to make substantial *ontological distinctions* between *ontological categories*, those who posit structured SOAs merely on the basis of linguistic evidence (see §4.2).²¹

I shall call the understanding of truthmaking's role in CC-ing represented by Cheater Argument 1: the Weak Cheater View (WEAK). On WEAK, TT can only catch cheaters with the help of a lot of ontological machinery. I have argued that this kind of CC-ing cannot motivate TT. I have been defending and trying to articulate a more modest, but more robustly effective view, which I shall call the Strong Cheater View (STRONG). STRONG is the view that TT can indeed catch cheaters independently of additional ontological commitments. STRONG works by demanding that theories accept that the world is the way it is described in their theories: that there are TMKs (understood

¹⁹This is one of the points that Merricks (2007: 36) makes which I emphasised in §6.2: that a full TT is also a full ontological theory. This, as I am pointing out and re-emphasising here, is the problem.

²⁰Recall my discussions in §1.4–1.6, where I argued for the compatibility of TT with deflationary and neutralist accounts, as well as anti-realist and pragmatist accounts, of the nature of truth, and, in §1.7 and §4.1, of the nature of reality.

²¹These examples, and the ones in the next section, are sufficient. But, in Appendix 4, I discuss further examples. In particular, I discuss the charge of word magic, which, when understood in the light of SAC, I suggest makes the *real task* of CC-ing even clearer and more powerful.

metaphysically modestly; see §4) for every positive claim of the theory (see §3).²²

Thus, STRONG comes in a different form from WEAK (as it is displayed in Cheater Argument 1). The proper TMK-argument against cheaters might go:

Cheater Argument 2:

(Premise 1) *Truthmaker*: If Theory Y claims that p , where p is a positive TBR, then Theory Y is committed to there *being* TMKs for p ;

(Premise 2) Theory Y claims that p .

(Conclusion 1) Theory Y is committed to there *being* TMKs for p .

(Premise 3) Theory Y denies commitment (either explicitly or implicitly) to there *being* any TMKs for p .

(Premise 4) *Cheater Identification Principle*: Any theory that (either explicitly or implicitly) denies commitment to there *being* TMKs that make true any of its (positive) claims is cheating.

(Conclusion 2) Theory Y is cheating.

In short, cheaters are those theorists who either implicitly or explicitly deny Truthmaker (premise 1) and CIP (premise 4) by accepting the following:

CHEATER-TRUTH (CHEATER): There are TBRs which are *true* even if the world is not the way it is described by those TBRs.

We can now see that SHY (from §6.1) is a form of CHEATER.²³ SHY CHEATERS do not own up to the minimum commitments that their theories must accept. EXTRAVAGANT CHEATERS are also CHEATERS of another sort. They build into TT too much question-begging metaphysical baggage, and claim that WEAK-CC arguments are actually the work of TT. Both are cheaters. I have already presented good examples of EXTRAVAGANT CHEATERS (in §4.2 and §4.3). In the next chapter, my Modest Realism will help us understand who the SHY CHEATERS are. In the next section, I shall try to help us identify CHEATER semantic strategies generally by contrasting CHEATERS with non-realist views which do not cheat, such as error theories and fictionalist theories.

6.5 Distinguishing the Cheater from the Error Theorist and Fictionalist

Cheating is not a matter of making ontologically dubious claims, but rather it is a matter of having the wrong semantics, the wrong view of how language relates to reality

²²I shall speak loosely sometimes and say that STRONG catches cheaters, while if I was articulating this more precisely, I would say that TT-ists who accept STRONG catch cheaters.

²³I have intentionally made the abbreviation 'CHEATER' stand for both the above claim and when used personally as the abbreviation for those theorists who implicitly or explicitly accept the claim.

especially in terms of truth. By implicitly (or explicitly) ignoring the demands of the basic account of truthmaking (BATT), one will be cheating. To help us see who these cheaters are, I shall (in this section) distinguish the CHEATER from others who are not cheating, namely the error theorist and the normal fictionalist. Let's restrict our discussion mainly to TBRs about ordinary objects and cases that involve discourse about those things which are part of our ordinary worldview, such as persons, animals, tables, chairs, institutions, acts of killing, acts of cheating, and states of mind.

There are many positions in philosophy which draw conclusions about the nature of such discourse and the nature of the entities referred to in that discourse. For example, error theorists about ordinary discourse would claim that all ordinary discourse is just plain false and that we are in error when we claim that discourse concerning ordinary objects is true. This is compatible with TT. An error theorist can think that what it is for a TBR to be true is that what the TBR is about needs to exist (and be the way things really are). The error theorist just thinks that none of the entities exist and that we are in error when we claim that such discourse says anything true. Although I think (on independent grounds) that error theorists are mistaken about ordinary entities, they are *not* cheating as they accept the consequences on their world-view for accepting modest TT. They shirk commitment to ordinary entities and are convinced that they do not exist *for independent reasons*. But, they do this by accepting that any TBRs that are committed to such entities are false, and by claiming that we are in error for thinking otherwise.

Of course, the falsity and error of such TBRs do not always make the error theorist want to drop talk about the domain in question. For example, Mackie (1977), though an error theorist about morality, doesn't think that this is a good reason for dropping talk about morality.²⁴ This kind of error-theoretic view usually leads to a view called *fictionalism*. Field (1980, 1989), for example, is a fictionalist about mathematics.²⁵ He thinks that even though mathematical TBRs are false, one should not drop talk about mathematical objects because of its usefulness. In fact, his error theory and his fictionalism is motivated by a realist conception of truth at the heart of TT. Field argues and accepts that the truth of mathematics demands the existence of mathematical objects.²⁶ But

²⁴See especially (1977: 233–234) where he discusses the doctrine of natural law as a potentially “useful fiction” and (1977: 239) where he diagnoses the objectification of moral values and obligations as “not only a natural but also a useful fiction” (ibid.).

²⁵See also (Melia 2000: 457), (Balaguer 1998: §5), and (Yablo 2000: 211ff, 2001: 74ff, 2002: 225–230).

²⁶See Field (1980: vi–vii) where he relies on this point in his summary of his main, and most famous, anti-indispensability argument for his fictionalist, error theory. In (1989: 228–230), he is agnostic about the issue of whether CT or the disquotational notion of truth has any bearing on his attack on mathematical realism, but mainly in regard to whether or not these theories of truth require *mind-and-language-independent entities*. The realist conception of truth, as I understand it, pervades his defence of mathematical fictionalism and his attack on mathematical realism. He makes this clear, for instance, when he writes that “anyone who adopts an attitude of *literal belief* towards mathematical theories taken at face value is a mathematical realist. For a mathematical theory, taken at face value, is a theory that is primarily *about* some postulated realm of mathematical entities: numbers, or functions, or sets or whatever (or some combination, like numbers and sets together). *You can't consistently*

the entities one would have to posit or accept into one's theory if mathematical TBRs are true, conflict with physicalism since they are abstract entities and do not participate in the world's physical, causal order. Hence, according to Field, a staunch physicalist, they are ontologically unacceptable.²⁷ Thus, on the basis of his acceptance of realism concerning truth and the ontological consequences that it demands, he advocates an error-theoretical view of mathematics where TBRs such as '7 is prime' are false.

Instead of rejecting mathematical talk altogether, this leads him to a revisionary account of the practice of mathematics where the utility and importance of mathematical theories do not lie in their truth, but rather in what he calls their *conservativeness*,²⁸ the characteristic of mathematical theories which makes making derivations easier than if they were made using true or ontologically more respectable premises. Mathematical talk, even if it is all in error and systematically false, can be used because it is useful. Hence, we accept the *fiction* of mathematical talk for its many virtues; these virtues just happen not to involve truth. As Kalderon emphasises,

'Acceptance' is a technical term and is explicitly stipulated to be neutral as to whether acceptance is belief in the content of the accepted sentence or is some other attitude. [2005a: 2]

So, Field *accepts* mathematical TBRs because of non-truth-involving norms, but because he is a realist concerning truth, he thus thinks that we should not *believe* that mathematical statements are true.²⁹

Similarly, a *fictionalist about ordinary discourse* would claim that we are engaging in a kind of fictionalising. Fictionalists who follow Walton (1990) claim that we are engaging in a kind of make-believe when we talk about such entities. All of these entities are merely fictitious. Truth, according to the fictionalist, is not a matter of whether there are such entities, whether such entities exist in the real world, but rather, it is a matter

believe the theory without believing in the entities it postulates" (1989: 2; my emphases). As he admits in (2001: §8; reprint of [1994]), there is *some* discrepancy between his earlier work on mathematical fictionalism and this later discussion of vagueness, where he discusses the extent to which what he calls "factually defective discourse" (2001: vii) can be given a *deflationary account of truth*.

²⁷This is of course, a simplified version of his overall argument structure, but I think it captures its core. See (1991: 231) for at least one place where he raises the causal interaction problem for mathematical realists (specifically of the Platonist sort).

²⁸See (Field 1989: 4). In discussing the relation between truth and conservativeness, Field writes that conservativeness is not a "*weaker* goal" (ibid.: 59) than truth, but a "*different* goal" (ibid.), and one that is "quite independent" (ibid.: 62) from truth. See his (ibid.: 61–65) argument for details of why conservativeness, not truth, explains the utility and lack of error in proofs using mathematical theory.

²⁹Kalderon (2005a: 6), following (Burgess 1983), calls Field a "revolutionary fictionalist." This is because Field thinks that we should revise our mathematical practice accordingly, since normal current practice involves taking mathematical statements as important because they are true representations of the world. Kalderon (ibid.) contrasts the revolutionary fictionalist with the "hermeneutic fictionalist." As an instance of the latter, Kalderon cites van Fraassen's (1980) constructive empiricism concerning scientific practice. Instead of aiming to revise the practice of scientists, as Field wants to revise the practice of mathematicians, van Fraassen thinks that he is accurately describing scientific practice *as it is practiced*. Yablo (2001: 74–84 and 2002: 225–230) also presents a form of hermeneutic fictionalism. In both kinds of fictionalism, there is an underlying assumption that even though their claims are strictly speaking false, working with or accepting their claims as if they were true, accepting them fictionally, is a very useful practice.

of whether other conditions are satisfied. For example, it might be a matter of whether one can correctly say that such entities (fictionally) exist in a specific fictional world that we are pretending to exist or whether it is consistent with what is said about other entities which we are pretending to exist. Consider T1: 'This table exists'. T1 would count as true as long as there is that table in the (supposed) fictional world of ordinary discourse just as 'Elves exist' counts as true in the fictional world that Tolkien writes about in his books.

Such views are not cheaters, however, because what fictionalists (of the sort I am considering) mean with 'true' in these cases is obviously not the same as what realists about truth mean when applying 'true' to relevant cases. But, a fictionalist, such as Field, does not stretch the notion of truth to include *fictional truth*, and can still be a realist about truth. Fictionalists who employ talk of *fictional truth* may be using *truth-like* norms when talking about their fictional worlds. When talking about ordinary objects, a fictionalist about such objects might use *the language of truth*. However, they would be using the language of truth to signify other virtues. For instance, talk of truth in such contexts might take the place of talking directly about the practical utility of accepting that there is a chair that one is sitting on, even if one believes that there are no such things as chairs, and one is just engaging in a kind of make-believe. Fictionalists might even model a notion of *fictional truth* on (literal) truth,³⁰ even using the apparatus of truthmaking to flesh out a similar, but distinct notion.³¹ Even if a fictionalist uses the language of truth, as is obvious from the very label they call themselves by, they do

³⁰According to Currie (2010: 74–75), fictional truth is "what is so according to the narrative" (ibid.: 75) or "the world of the story" (ibid.), and what is literally true of the story is just those aspects of the world of the story which are also part of or match with "the real world" (ibid.). Similarly, Friend (2016) thinks that what is fictionally true is "what is the case according to the story" (ibid.: 3). However, according to her, just because a TBR is fictionally true, this doesn't mean that it is not also true in the normal sense because of what she calls "the Reality Assumption [...] that everything that is (really) true is also fictionally the case, unless excluded by the work" (ibid.: 1). But presumably, what is literally true, including those aspects of the fiction which are not excluded by the work, is what is true according to reality. These accounts, I think, model fictional truth on (literal) truth because they work in the same way, that is, both fictional and literal truth depend on how things are in some world. The difference is just that the former depends on how things are in the world of the story, while the latter depends on how things are in the real world.

³¹Fictionalists often use the language of *truthmaking* to describe the fictional activities and practices that people engage in. For example, Walton (2013: 1) claims that in fictional contexts of *make-believe* or in a relevant *pretense*, there are real world TMKs for TBRs about make-believe things. These are what he calls "props," which are, as he explains, "real world objects or states of affairs that *make propositions true* in the make-believe world, i.e. "fictional"" (ibid., my emphases). (He discusses prop-oriented make-believe in more detail in [Walton 1993: 39ff and 2000: 92ff]). For instance, 'Jonny is carrying a gun' is made true in the make-believe world by Jonny's carrying a branch (in this case it is the prop) in the non-make-believe, real world. In this case, Jonny's carrying a branch does not literally *make true* 'Jonny is carrying a gun' but it fictionally makes that TBR true. (This example is from [Eklund 2015: §2.4], who also uses the language of truthmaking in his description.) To make this clearer, Walton makes a useful distinction between propositions being "fictional" and being "true," where "[t]o be *fictional* is to be (as we say) true-in-a-fictional-world, the world of a game of make-believe" (2015: 176) and where "[f]eatures of props are understood to *make propositions fictional*, to generate fictional truths" (ibid.: 176; my emphasis). Eklund describes Walton's view as taking such propositions as "pretend-true" (2015: §4.6). Truth is understood normally, but interestingly, *being fictional* is kept clearly distinct from, but is understood on the model of, literal truth.

not claim that what they take to be fictionally true is literally true. Or rather, this is what a fictionalist who takes truth seriously should think.³²

Thus fictionalists and error theorists do not cheat if they accept that if a TBR is true the world needs to be the way it is described. However, as I've stated earlier, cheaters, in the case of ordinary discourse, are those who believe that TBRs *about* ordinary entities are true while at the same time believing that there are no TMKs for these TBRs. There is a complication in this discussion, however. The tricky part about TBRs of *ordinary discourse* is that they are often *vague* and *indeterminate*. It is unclear whether vagueness and indeterminacy can be a feature of the world.³³ Must we then be error theorists or fictionalists about all ordinary discourse? I shall stay neutral about this.

One point that I can make, however, is that TAAT has some resources to deal with this issue. In effect, TAAT will claim that for *TBRs of ordinary discourse* to be true, we are merely committed to what we are talking about in the ordinary TBRs to have *being*. In effect, TAAT would just require us to figure out what *the best SEM-TAC* says they are about, and then go from there. Linguistic indeterminacy and vagueness is rampant in ordinary discourse (as opposed to scientific discourse). But, clearly the best semantic account of what we are talking about would not commit us to the existence of indeterminate entities such as Russell's *ambiguous man* (1905: 41), Anscombe's "*man of no particular height*" (1965: 161), or *the average family* in the TBR 'the average family has 2.1 children'. The best SEM-TAC is not a simple or naive referential theory which takes the surface grammar of our talk at face value (see §2.4.1). For example, Russell talks about the ambiguous man merely to motivate his own deeper analysis and general theory of denoting of *apparent* talk about such men. When we seem to be talking about indeterminate entities, we must be talking about something else. I cannot give a full semantics of ordinary discourse here. However, it is safe to say that our *best semantic account of what ordinary discourse is about* will yield a much more sophisticated and plausible account of the TMKs of ordinary discourse than what we are at first consideration committed to. In effect, the *best semantic account of what ordinary discourse is about* will yield a much more plausible, though modest, account of the ontology and being which underlies such discourse.

³²It would be a very interesting project to see how close other forms of fictionalism come to cheating. For example, other forms of fictionalism might not be as conservative or prone to accept an error theory as Field is. Others still may not be willing to make what seems like a sharp distinction between *being fictional* and *being true*, as Walton (see previous footnote for references) seems to. However, this interesting project needs to be left for another time.

³³Despite the fact that most would balk at the idea that there is vagueness in the world, some philosophers aim to defend such a contentious view. For example, see (Lowe 1998: 64ff) where he discusses five different objections against the more simple argument against vague objects presented by Evans (1978), and where he argues that Evans's argument is invalid. See also (Lowe 1994) where he introduces considerations to do with Quantum Indeterminacy to argue that vague identity is possible. See also (van Inwagen 1990: 244ff) for another argument against vague objects.

6.5.1 Motivating TT by Understanding CC-ing Semantically

For the sake of clarifying what exactly the CHEATER theorist is up to, let us pretend that *the best semantic account of ordinary discourse* yields that we must take its apparent ontology at face-value. Cheater theorists would be the theorists who do not accept that their talk of ordinary entities is true *in the sense that it is merely fictionally true*.³⁴ Instead, they try to take *truth seriously* by claiming that talk about ordinary entities is *literally true*³⁵ even though their truth does not commit us to the TMKs of ordinary discourse. Like the error theorist and the normal fictionalist,³⁶ CHEATERS are *nihilists about ordinary entities* since they believe that there are no such entities and no way these entities are. However, unlike the error theorist and the normal fictionalist, they accept that *positive* claims made about ordinary entities, including *positive* existential claims, can be *true* and frequently are true despite the fact that there are no ordinary entities. Thus, they either explicitly or implicitly endorse a combination of two views: (1) *Nihilism* about some discourse X, that is, the view that entities of domain X are not real or do not exist; and (2) *Truth* in that discourse. A great part of the appeal of

³⁴See fn. 31 above on Walton's distinction between being fictionally true and being literally true.

³⁵I am making the same background concessions here when talking about literal truth as I shall in my discussion of lurches and creeps (see Appendix 4, §A4.3). In the way I understand it, literal truth cuts through any sort of allegorical or metaphorical transmutation of standard usage into non-standard usage. Talk about creeps, though it perhaps has a different *emotional impact* or *emphasis* than talk of discomfort or unease, can have the same TMK-conditions and truth-conditions as talk of discomfort and unease. Literal truth depends on what we're strictly and fully talking about.

³⁶I say "normal" here because there are also fictionalists who believe that fictionalism about a given discourse does not require one to be either a nihilist or an anti-realist of any sort about that discourse. In fact, they think that fictionalism and realism are compatible. However, such views are controversial, and I would say, a contradiction in terms (at least according to my understanding of what it is to be a *fictionalist*). Obviously one can be realist about certain entities that one talks about in fictional discourse. For example, one can talk about Napoleon in a historical fiction such as *War and Peace*, and be a realist about Napoleon. But, one is not thereby being a fictionalist about Napoleon; one is merely including him in one's fiction. It seems to me that it is plainly false that one can be a *fictionalist* about something while believing that that thing exists and is real. Fictionalists, as I understand them and I take them to be normally understood, merely *accept* statements for the sake of convenience, usefulness, for aesthetic reasons, etc. Acceptance has different norms than the norms of belief, which are truth-norms. I can imagine one who might hold both realism, that is, believe in entities of some domain of inquiry, and call oneself a fictionalist because what guides one's scientific practice within the relevant domain of inquiry X would be the norms of acceptance rather than the norms of truth. However, the label 'fictionalism' seems to me a misnomer in such cases. Of course, there are ways to try to defend a kind of fictional realism by for instance developing an ontology of fictional characters or fictional objects as the objects of reference and quantification of fictional TBRs. See Everett (2005) for a critical discussion of such views and further references. Also, see for instance Jay (2011) for a recent defence of what he calls "realistic fictionalism" in the case of morals. There is another view defended by Cameron (2012) and others called fictional realism. This view is realist about the entities-in-fiction that were created, or, as I would say, imagined or conjured up for the sake of a story, by novelists. For instance, Rakhmetov is a fictional character in a book by Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1989). Cameron argues that such fictional characters are real — they exist as abstract entities grounded in what one might call "acts of interpretation" (ibid.: 195), which he interestingly claims to be the "*truth makers* for claims concerning fictional beings" (ibid.). Cameron not only presents an interesting metaphysics of fictional entities but, in a similar manner to Walton (see fn. 31 above), uses the tools and language of truthmaking to flesh out his nominalist, realist ontology of fictional entities. However, such realistic fictionalists are neither fictionalist in the relevant sense (e.g. in the sense of Field and others), nor are they cheaters.

TT's conception of truth comes from the fact that such a combination of views seems obviously wrong to hold.

Thus, if we understand CHEATING and CC-ing in this way, TT can be motivated by the task of CC-ing. The metaphysically substantial views of CC-ing merely present a poisoned pawn which the TT-skeptic can use to undermine the CC-ing power of TT. But as I've argued, the metaphysically substantial understanding of TT and CC-ing leaves all the CC-ing to the separate task of discovering what is and what is not metaphysically dubious. However, when we understand CC-ing in this metaphysically modest, semantic way, then there is indeed a good, intuitive motivation for TT: CHEATERS are those who have a bad view of the semantics and the relation between truths and reality.

We now have a way of identifying the CHEATER and know how to use the Cheater Identification Principle (§6.4) in an argument by distinguishing the CHEATER from the error theorist and the fictionalist about a certain domain of discourse. And perhaps more importantly, we have a better, more modest way of understanding how CC-ing can motivate TT.

6.6 Does CC-ing require one to be a Truthmaker Maximalist?

T-M is the view that *all* truths require TMKs. Any supposed cheater claims that there are certain truths that are not true in virtue of anything in the world. However, instead of branding them as cheating one might respond by saying that they are just rejecting T-M. To put the point differently, if T-M is false, then the supposed cheater is potentially able to reply that there is no motivation to think they are doing anything wrong when claiming that certain truths do not require TMKs; they have just identified some of the exceptions. This would count as a possible objection to the CC-ing power of truthmaking.

There are quite a few TT-ists who reject T-M. See §3.2 for a list. These TT-ists are what Mellor calls "moderate" TT-ists; such philosophers do not think that there is anything about truths in general that requires there to be TMKs.³⁷ And as I argued in

³⁷Mellor similarly writes:

But then why not take a theory of truthmakers to be a theory of truth itself: why not admit that truthmaker theory is really a correspondence theory of truth under another name? The reason is that a theory of truthmakers that is also a theory of truth will have to give all truths truthmakers; and this begs the question against moderate truthmaking by assuming that every truth is made true by something other than its entailment by another truth. [2009: 277]

As I argued in §3, negative truths do not require TMKs. So, I also reject T-M. Furthermore, just as other "moderates," I think that TAAT also has the resources to give a satisfying *aboutness-based* account of TMKs for conjunctive truths and disjunctive truths (see §2.4.2.4). On my account these truths have TMKs; the TMKs are just what the TBRs are about. On Mellor's account, no TMKs need to be given since for instance A&B is molecular and is made true by the atomic truths with which it is related by entailment, namely A and B. On my account, the TMKs come out roughly to be the same in most of

§3, TAAT, my favoured version of TT, can address P-NEG and reject T-M in a non-arbitrary way. According to those of us who reject T-M, if cheaters are to be caught, it must be because there is something special about the truths in question that they require TMKs even though the theories in question do not provide them. I shall argue in this section that CC-ing does not require one to be a T-M-ist.

6.6.1 CC-ing does not require one to be a T-M-ist: *The TAAT Response*

T-M does not *need* to be true for the TT-ist to argue against cheaters; T-M just makes the CC-ing task more straightforward. TAAT allows the TT-ist to adopt what one might call a *piecemeal* or *particularist approach* to CC-ing, which addresses each theory on a case-by-case basis rather than by invoking T-M. Against each cheater theory, we can argue for the need for TMKs by stating some semantic grounds for why the particular claims that the accused cheater takes to be true in fact need TMKs. Or the TT-ist can attempt to undermine any special reasons that the cheater theory might give for thinking that those particular truths do not need TMKs. Thus, to catch the cheater, we need either an argument for why all truths need TMKs (an argument for T-M) or an argument why certain sorts of truths need TMKs. The latter kind of argument might vary in many ways depending on the truths and cases in question. But, we might be able to say something more general if we ask ourselves: “What kinds of truths require TMKs?”

As I made clear in §3, I think that the obvious requirement is that if a TBR is about something in the world and makes or implicitly contains a *positive claim* about the world, that something in the world must be the case for the truth to be true. Some truths might not be about anything’s existing. For example, negative truths are not strictly and fully about anything that exists. They claim that something *doesn’t exist*. If they are not about anything that exists,³⁸ then it is perfectly reasonable to think that they are not made true by anything either. For instance, if one is a mathematical fictionalist or if one is not a modal realist, then one might think that TBRs about mathematics or about possible worlds are not about any things that exist but that they are truth-apt and sometimes true (in some sense) nevertheless. Apparent talk about mathematics or

these cases. Also, just to be sure, Mellor thinks that a relation between *some* TBRs and non-TBRs is essential to TT, even on his moderate version. He writes, “This thesis, that no true proposition owes its truth to anything nonpropositional, is incompatible with the whole idea of truthmaking: that true propositions generally owe their truth to something else” (2009: 274).

³⁸Remember, I am not using the Representationalist terminology of ‘about’ here. The Cranean terminology, which I adopt, captures the intuitive idea that we can talk about things which do not exist. When we say positive things about them, the TBRs are false. When we say negative things about them, the TBRs are sometimes true. In neither case is there any commitment to their existing. See §2.6.

possible worlds might just be *convenient ways for us to talk*,³⁹ heuristic devices,⁴⁰ or useful fictions.⁴¹ In such cases, one might use the *vocabulary* of truth to express other virtues and thus *accept* such talk for the purpose of usefulness and convenience.

However, I think that such acceptance for the sake of other virtues such as convenience or usefulness does not amount to acceptance for the sake of *truth*. If a non-maximalist thinks that positive TBRs about nothing (as talk concerning possible worlds might be if the modal anti-realist is right) are still *somehow* true, then there is a significant amount of explaining to do. Such a non-maximalist would have to explain why these are *special exceptions* to the TMK-rule by explaining in what sense the TBRs are true if they are not really about anything at all, or not about any thing that exists (let alone how things are with such a thing). And, further, one would have to explain the very strong illusion of being *positively about* certain things, such as numbers or possible worlds.⁴² The usual route for someone who thinks that one is engaging in a useful fiction is to *deny* the truth of the subject matter. This is because there is a strong case to be made that each of these TBRs is about what we seem to be talking about (e.g. mathematical objects). If this is the case, then it seems obvious that the TBR's truth has something to do with whether or not what it is about, that is, what it claims to be the case, holds. Thus, we might formulate a restricted maximalist claim thus:

Restricted-Maximalism (Tm-X): All positive TBRs are true iff they are made true by something (in the world), as long as they are *about* something (in the world).⁴³

Tm-X is substantially different from T-M, since it is clear that there are plenty of truths that are not *positively about anything*, such as negative truths. This formulation *makes*

³⁹Most philosophers who use the idiom of possible worlds to articulate modal claims tend to take this line and are not, as Lewis (1986) is, modal realists.

⁴⁰Van Fraassen's (1980: 61ff) constructive empiricism argues for a kind of heuristic fictionalism concerning science, where we should *accept* scientific theories even if they fall short of truth because of some other non-truth-involving virtues such as empirical adequacy or usefulness.

⁴¹Field (1980, 1989) defends what Kalderon (2005a: 6) calls "revolutionary fictionalism" about mathematics. See Rosen (1990) who introduced fictionalism about modality as fictionalist talk about possible worlds. Rosen thinks that by being a modal fictionalist, or "deflationist" (ibid.: 330) as he calls it, one can retain the utility of talking in terms of possible worlds as an "innocent *façon de parler*" (ibid.) while flaunting a commitment to possible worlds, giving the modal realist "an incredulous stare" (ibid.: 329).

⁴²Although I do not have space to discuss their views in detail, Horgan and his various collaborators (with Barnard [2006], and with Potrč [2006, 2008, 2012]) are examples of ones who subscribe to a cheater semantics. Horgan and Potrč (2008: 20ff) go some way to explicate this by explaining that the kind of widespread error that unreflective common-sense makes is one that, according to them, "people are particularly apt to make given the normal workings of their cognitive apparatus" (ibid.) and are instances of what they call "competence-based performance errors" (ibid.). They discuss cases such as the Müller-Lyer illusion to make a distinction between how things *look* to us and how things really are. I cannot explore this further since this would require me to explore details about the connection between evidence, especially perceptual and linguistic evidence, further and more deeply than I have room for. Also, I don't have to explore this now because my point here concerns the potential illusion that TBRs are about something, which is one that I do address and which is a more general type of potential illusion than the ones that Horgan et al. discuss.

⁴³This formulation is meant to exclude positive TBRs which use non-existence-entailing expressions such as 'mythological' and hence do not need to be made true by existing things in the world.

explicit the intuitive idea central to TAAT that most TBRs are at least about something in the world.

Cheater theories are then those theories which claim that certain truths are true and about something in the world, but also claim that nothing makes them true and that they are not true in virtue of anything in the world (including what the truths are about). To defend against the cheater argument an accused cheater would have to say what about those truths makes them special in such a way that they are both about something in the world and that nothing in the world makes them true. Or they would have to explain away the illusion of the truth being about something which should exist and be the way it's described.

6.6.2 CHEATERS Reject Tm-X Arbitrarily

The central problem is that the responses they are left with are not very attractive. First, it seems like a contradiction both to think that a TBR '*p*' is about something in the world, *q*, but also to think that nothing makes '*p*' true or that '*p*' is not true in virtue of anything. If '*p*' is about *something*, and hence claims that the world is some way, then it is natural to think that at least something needs to be the case for the TBR to be true. There would have to be something *very* special about such TBRs to make their denial of truthmaking at all plausible or convincing. Without a good, convincing reason for why they are special, the rejection of Tm-X which would allow these TBRs to be true without TMKs seems merely arbitrary.

6.6.3 CHEATERS Posit a Problematic Sort of Brute Truth

Second, if nothing makes the relevant TBRs true, then they would be brute truths. Many theories take some truths to be brute. For instance, a physical theory that explains why potassium explodes in water might take the fundamental laws of nature to be brute. However, the brute truths of such theories are not brute in the same way that cheater-claims are brute. The cheater's brute truths are brute in the sense that they are *positively about something but nothing makes them true*. The statements of the fundamental laws of nature are *not* brute in this sense. They are positively about *something*, the fundamental laws of nature, and they are true if the laws of nature are the way they are described. Truths about the fundamental laws of nature are normally taken to be brute in the sense that there are no other laws which explain them; they are *fundamental* laws.

Let's briefly discuss an example to get a grip of such non-cheater brute truths. It is a plausible meta-theoretical principle that the more explanatory power a theory has, the stronger or better it is. A theory is better and has more explanatory power than another theory if it explains more (has more explanatory scope) and leaves less unexplained (has less brute posits). For example, if one theory explains the same things as another theory

but posits only two fundamental laws rather than the other theory's four, then the first, ontologically less committal theory is preferable. This is because there is no evidence that the extra elements in the stronger theory are actually required for the best explanation. Because the first theory posits less elements and explains precisely the same things as the other theory, it is explanatorily more powerful.⁴⁴

The problem with cheater theories, by contrast with theories which do not flout the demands of Tm-X, is that they do not just posit brute truths as theoretical posits, as theories *about fundamental* physics do, they posit completely mysterious truths, which are at the same time *about the world* but which *do not depend on the world for their truth*. These two claims seem inconsistent. Unlike the theorist who posits fundamental laws and can explain their bruteness by claiming that the world is just that way, the cheater has no recourse to even such a meagre explanation.

6.6.4 CHEATERS Cannot Appeal to the Vacuousness of their TBRs

Third, the cheater might try to take another strategy to explain away the illusion of the truth in question being about something real. The cheater might try to argue that the TBRs in question are in fact *vacuous* despite the illusion of being non-vacuous.

However, this is not a good strategy. For the sake of argument, let us assume that vacuous TBRs can be truth-apt and even true. Even if vacuous entities can be truth-apt, surely there is no point in arguing that one's theory contains vacuous claims (even if they are *somehow* true). Normally, one would try to explain away the illusion of *non-vacuousness* when one is *criticising* a theory by arguing that despite the fact that its claims are apparently about the world (let alone something interesting or substantial or significant about the world), the claims in fact are not about anything. But, this would be a poor strategy for someone to take in response to the cheater argument. It is almost just as bad, if not worse, to be revealed to be saying nothing than it is to be caught out in the pretense, or in an earnest but unsuccessful attempt, at saying something. Of course, one's aim in positing truths which are vacuous, or are not about anything, might be aesthetic rather than descriptive, for example, one might be happy to indulge in fantasies or absurdities and take them to be true.⁴⁵ But, that is not what a serious

⁴⁴Effingham (2013: §2) puts explanatory power in terms of the balance of brute truths and explanatory scope.

⁴⁵Carroll's (1871) Jabberwocky poem is a good example of non-descriptive, but clever, nonsense aimed at eliciting an experience out of the reader rather than describing and being about anything in particular. Baier (1967: 520f) discusses six types of nonsense, of which the final two "vocabulary nonsense" (ibid.: 521) and pure gibberish (ibid.) are excellent taxonomies for the kinds of expressions I have in mind. With regard to pure gibberish, Baier writes that such nonsense is "part of some language, to the minimal extent of sharing its alphabet with that language" (ibid.). Humpty Dumpty may take what he says to be true, but neither he nor anyone else might have a clue as to what he's talking about. See (Parsons 1994: 67–73) for a discussion of what she calls the "semiotic catastrophe" of the Jabberwocky poem.

theory about the world should be doing.

6.7 Conclusions of this Chapter

What I have argued for in this chapter is that catching cheaters is a matter of catching out theories about the world which either implicitly or explicitly claim that truth is not a matter of the world being the way it is described by the truth. I argued first (§6.1–6.2) that other ways of framing the CC-ing power of TT relegate the role that TT plays in catching out these cheaters, or what they call dubious ontologies, to a mere supporting and minor one. I then argued (§6.3–6.4) that there is a conception of CC-ing, which I called STRONG (as opposed to the WEAK, minor one), which shows that CC-ing should focus on semantics rather than metaphysics. Second (§6.5), I made clearer what cheater theories are by contrasting them with error theories and fictionalist theories. Third (§6.6), I presented a potential general challenge to STRONG: if not all truths require TMKs, then why should the truths that the supposed cheater accepts into her theory? I argued that this consideration is not successful in undermining the power of TT to catch cheaters, especially when we understand TT as TAAT and that we need to address the need for TMKs in a piecemeal manner.

Chapter 7

Truthmaking and Reality: *The Retreat to Modest Realism*

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall argue that TT-ists must retreat to a point of relative modesty in regard to the extent of the influence that TT can have on debates concerning realism and anti-realism. TT's task is not, as some have thought, to *articulate* realism (in general), to *reject* anti-realism, or to do anything of much metaphysical substance. Rather, I shall argue that TT-ists must *retreat* from the claim that TT can be necessarily tied to a substantial form of realism to a much more modest claim, that perhaps the best a TT-ist of realist leanings can get is that TT is tied to a very modest version of realism, which I call Modest Realism (M-REAL). There are many views that go by the names 'realism' and 'anti-realism'. So, the main task of this chapter is to narrow down what this modest version of realism is.

7.2 Realism and TT

I shall start with a few quotes, first from Armstrong:

To demand truthmakers for particular truths is to accept a *realist* theory for those truths. There is something that exists in reality, independent of the proposition in question, which makes the truth true. [2004: 5]

Second, from Bigelow again:

I have sometimes tried to stop believing in the Truthmaker axiom. Yet I have never succeeded. Without some such axiom, I find I have no adequate anchor to hold me from drifting onto the shoals of some sort of pragmatism or idealism. And that is altogether uncongenial to me; I am a congenital realist about almost everything, as long as it is compatible with some sort of naturalism or physicalism, loosely construed. [1988: 123]

Both of these quotations claim that there is a close connection between TT and realism. This is the stance of the early, metaphysically immodest TT-ists. Armstrong thinks

that demanding that there are TMKs for TBRs is just demanding that one should be ontologically realist about the TMKs for the TBR. Bigelow says that he cannot shake off his belief in TT, because doing so would lead him astray, away from realism. This implies that he thinks that being a TT-ist is *necessary* for being a realist. It seems that Armstrong and Bigelow would agree with Heil when he says that TT “is a central tenet of realism” (2003: 61).

It is relevant to note, however, that none of these philosophers explains in any satisfactory detail what the realism that TT is so intimately connected to amounts to. Realism is a varied school; many distinct doctrines go by the name ‘realism’. Is there a particular form of realism that TT-ists are committed to? How do we spell out the relevant notion of realism? Is there an alternative, more modest form of realism which is compatible with a more modest version of TT? These are the central questions which I aim to address in what follows.

7.2.1 A Defective Account I: *Armstrong, Independence, and Defective Categorisation*

Armstrong (above) mentions that the TMKs are *independent* of the TBR in question. In other places he claims that we can *define* realism thus, “We may then define *realism* about a truth of a particular true proposition as the contention that its truth is determined by something that lies *outside* that proposition” (2003: 12). He calls the plausibility of this claim “the charter” of TT (ibid.). Further, Armstrong is a T-M-ist; he believes that every truth has a TMK (2004: 5). So, he is a *global realist* concerning every domain of discourse in which there are true or false TBRs.

However, Armstrong’s explanation of realism in terms of *independence* and truth’s “determination by something that lies *outside* that proposition” (2003: 12) is a poor articulation of realism. I argue in the next paragraphs that Armstrong’s definition is too weak to capture what realism amounts to. Here, I want to raise another quick worry with Armstrong’s talk of what lies “outside” propositions. On some conceptions of propositions, let’s call the following a Russellian conception of propositions, one might take objects such as you or I to be elements *within* or *inside* propositions about you or I. If the Russellian is correct and what makes propositions true is the reality they are about, then truths are not always determined by things that lie *outside* of the proposition. Such Russellians are presumably also realists about the TMKs of the propositions, even if the TMKs can be understood as *within* propositions. Without further explication of what the right theory of propositions are and what talk of being inside or outside propositions amounts to, Armstrong’s criterion here seems too strong.

There are of course many views that go by the names ‘realism’ and ‘anti-realism’, but some views are clearly realist or anti-realist. If one’s understanding of how to articulate realism yields the result that any of these clearly anti-realist views turn out realist, then

one's way of articulating realism clearly suffers from what Asay, exactly on this point, has called a "categorization defect" (2012: 377).

First, Asay (2012: 377) uses the case of error theories and fictionalist theories to illustrate his point about categorisation defects. I'll present his argument here, respond to it, and expand on it. As I argued in §6.5, error and fictionalist theories are central cases of non-cheaters. However, they are typically understood as anti-realist views since they hold that the claims of a certain domain are *systematically false*. However, if one is also a T-M-ist as Armstrong is, then, on the error theorist's account, the negation of the TBRs which are *positively about* the entities of these domains must have TMKs. For instance, if one is a mathematical error theorist and an Armstrongian TT-ist, one must accept that the claim *that there are no numbers* must have a TMK. And, on Armstrong's account of realism, all TMKs are real entities existing independently and outside of the propositions they make true. So, the error theorist turns out to be a realist. This is the wrong result. Thus, Asay (ibid.) argues, in this regard, Armstrong's definition suffers from a categorisation defect.

However, there is a problem with this argument. Armstrong will reply that the error theorist concerning talk about numbers can be a *realist* in regard to the negation of mathematical claims about numbers, but will not be realist about *positive* claims about numbers. What Asay's argument seems to show is that we need to relativise being realist to a domain, rather than that Armstrong's argument suffers from a categorisation defect. When relativised to the domain of positive mathematical claims, it seems that the error theorist remains an anti-realist or non-realist, even on Armstrong's view.

Unfortunately, the categorisation defect remains. An error theorist is indeed non-realist or anti-realist about the domain of positive claims about numbers; hence the widespread error. However, the error theorist takes there to be widespread error on the basis that (1) "truth is determined by something that lies *outside* [those] proposition[s]" (Armstrong 2003: 12), and (2) there is nothing *outside* of those propositions which can determine the truth of the propositions. So, the error theorist argues,¹ such positive propositions are systematically false. But (1) above is what Armstrong takes to be the definition of realism. Let's say, to be charitable to Armstrong against Asay's objection, that this definition provides a definition not of realism *tout court* but one that must be relativised to a domain. Even then, it seems that the error theorist we are concerned with will think truths about mathematical claims are determined by something that lies *outside* those claims. Consider, for example, 'Kempe's proof of the Four Colour Theorem is invalid'. This is indeed a truth about a mathematical claim, namely that Kempe's proof is invalid. Supposedly, even an error theorist must accept that this is true, and as a result must have *outside* TMKs. The same goes for the negative truths we discussed earlier. Hence, the error theorist about mathematics turns out to be a realist about

¹This is, in broad, simplified outline, the argumentation strategy I attributed to Field (1980, 1989) in §6.5.

mathematics (even though she thinks that all positive mathematical claims are false). This is indeed the wrong result. It seems that Armstrong's definition does suffer from a categorisation defect as Asay claims.

Second, as I pointed out in §1.7, various views which have traditionally been called anti-realist such as idealism and pragmatism, are compatible with BATT. Both of these versions of TT would claim that the TMKs are independent of and *outside* of the TBRs which they make true. For idealists, the TMKs are ideas such as the idea-that-constitutes-the-table, and for the pragmatist the TMKs might be the expediency of the TBRs for specific individuals. Both of these kinds of TMKs are *outside of* and independent of the TBRs. Generally, an anti-realist about a certain domain (or even a global anti-realist) can adhere to the principle that truths are made true by something in the world.² Such an anti-realist would say that something, in some sense independent of the TBR, will make it true. She might say, for instance, that the TMKs are the right evidential basis for the TBR. Thus, anti-realists in general turn out to be realists on Armstrong's definition of realism. His definition clearly suffers from a categorisation defect.

So, if we want to take Armstrong's view at face-value we must either reject it as providing the wrong *substantial notion of realism*, or interpret him as deflating the relevant notion of realism to include anti-realist views (as I shall do with my M-REAL). Although I shall argue that the latter is the only version of realism central to TT, I think that this constitutes a *problematic dilemma* for anyone who wants to have a *metaphysically substantial* version of TT, as Armstrong does.

7.2.2 A Defective Account II: *Bigelow and Supervenience*

Let's now turn to Bigelow. Bigelow (1988: 123) only says what realism might be in contrast to standard non-realist theories. Thus it is yet unclear what the appeal of realism is to TT-ists partly because it is unclear what realism is on his account. However, he gives some indication of what he might mean via the version of TT he accepts. He accepts the less metaphysically substantial view (when compared to Armstrong's T-NEC) that truth supervenes on being:

SUPERVENIENCE-TT (ST, for short): "If something is true, then it would not be possible for it to be false unless either certain things were to exist which don't, or else certain things had not existed which do." [Bigelow *ibid.*: 133]

He is not a T-M-ist because ST allows him to reject the idea that all truths require TMKs. In particular he can reject the idea that negative truths such as T7: 'Pegasus does not exist' require TMKs. Instead they are true because they lack a falsemaker. According to ST: if T7 is true, then it would not be possible for T7 to be false unless

²Dummett's adherence to Principle C makes him a *truth*-realist in my sense. See Appendix 1 for further details.

certain things were to exist which do not. T7 is indeed true and it is indeed not possible for T7 to be false unless certain things were to exist which do not, namely Pegasus. At the moment and in our world, T7 is true and this is, in ST terms, due to there not being a falsemaker³ for this truth, namely Pegasus.

What is Bigelow's view of realism? According to Bigelow, realism (1) is incompatible with traditional non-realisms, such as pragmatism and idealism; and (2) has ST as a necessary condition. To explain (1) let's assume that Bigelow holds the traditional view that realism has as a necessary condition that there are entities (and how things are with those entities) which are essentially mind-and-language independent. In fact, he is, as he claims, "a congenital realist [in this sense] about almost everything" (ibid.: 123). Thus, he seems to think that almost all truths supervene on entities which are mind-and-language independent. However, even if we improve on ST and say that truths do not just supervene on *what* exists but on *how* they exist,⁴ it is unclear how we can get the realism that Bigelow wants.

First, it is clear from the views I sketched in the previous section and in previous chapters that TT is not sufficient for realism in this sense. In fact, one cannot motivate TT by claiming that TT gives us this metaphysically substantial version of realism or that it helps to rule out views which, from this perspective, are unsavoury. As I argued in §6.2, this is question-begging against these views. Idealism⁵ and language-constructivism⁶ can both attempt to give an account of TMKs in terms of mental or linguistic entities. So, TT is not sufficient for realism in Bigelow's standard, substantial sense, nor is realism necessary for TT. The exact same point holds for the ST version of TT, since the idealist and language-constructivist can claim that truth supervenes on how things are with mind-dependent or language-dependent reality. To deny this on TT or ST grounds by building metaphysical assumptions into the theory is question begging. Even if one is a congenital realist, this is not because TT or ST is sufficient for realism, or because realism is necessary for TT or ST.

But, this is not the main problem for Bigelow. The fundamental problem with Bigelow's view is that it is also clear that TT or ST is not *necessary* for realism. One

³I have not said much about falsemakers, except for a brief discussion in §3.5. 'Falsmakers' is a common term in the literature. Whenever there are *truthmakers* for a negation (e.g. not-*p*), these are the *falsmakers* of *p*. According to Bigelow, falsmakers "*are* things whose existence entails that [the TBR] (N) is *false*" (see [Bigelow 1988: 132]). I reject such a view, as is clear from my favoured version of TT. TAAT only requires that there are falsmakers for false negative TBRs, such as 'there are no giraffes', which is made false by all and any of the existing giraffes there are. TBRs such as 'Pegasus exists' do not need falsmakers. It is false because it lacks a TMK, not because of the existence of anything, a falsmaker, but because of the lack of the existence of things which the TBR is about.

⁴See §4.1.2 for details. Also, see the same section where I discuss other problems for the supervenience view, such as its apparent *symmetry*. Let's ignore these issues for now.

⁵See the end of §6.2 for details.

⁶This is the view that everything that exists is constructed by language and thus dependent on language. Goodman (1978: 94; 1996: 144) holds such a view although he would deny TT since I think one should interpret him as a truth-nihilist, someone who believes that there is no such thing as truth, replacing it with another notion he calls 'rightness' (ibid.).

can be a realist about a certain domain of inquiry, claiming that the entities of the domain of inquiry exist or are real independently of what we say or think about them (while remaining, as he would like his preferred realist to be, a “physicalist or naturalist, loosely construed” [ibid.: 123]), without having any view of the relation between *truths* and *reality*.⁷ Views concerning what entities there are and concerning what their nature is, whether realist or anti-realist, have nothing to do with what the nature of the relation between truth and reality is. For instance, one can be a truth-nihilist and claim that there is no such property as truth, and at the same time hold the view that most things exist and are real independently of what we say or think about them. One can thus be a realist in the relevant sense without being a TT-ist.

Finally, though ST is a substantially weakened version of TT, it is clear that the same points hold for any version of TT which is not question-begging against anti-realism and related views.⁸

7.3 TAAT and the Limits of Realism: *A Presentation of Modest Realism*

So much for the intrinsic link between TT and substantial versions of realism. In this section I shall present what I think of as the right, metaphysically modest view of realism which comes out of TAAT. As I argued in §1.7, the non-symmetry and general asymmetry of BATT captured by the dependence of the truth of TBRs on the *being* of their TMKs is compatible with a *plurality* of philosophical views each of which can give candidate TMKs for the truth of the TBRs. However, given that more must be said about the relation, we need to *go beyond* BATT in a modest way. The way that I favour is the view that T-REL is the dual relation of A-REL, which is captured by the idea that the TBRs are made true by what they are strictly and fully *about*: their TMKs. And the way we identify what the TBRs are about is via *the best* SEM-TAC.

My hypothesis is that if there is any right story about TT, this story of how to go beyond BATT is the right story about all positive truths. It accounts for the TMKs for necessary truth. For example, ‘All bachelors are unmarried’ is about bachelors and about their being unmarried. Necessary abstract truths are about abstract entities such as numbers, if contrary to the error theorist there are any such things; for example ‘Five plus six equals half of twenty-two’ is plausibly about certain numbers and the relations between them. TAAT also accounts for contingent abstract truths such as truths about morals. For example, ‘Killing babies is wrong’ is about a certain type of action and its wrongness, and ‘Saving children from preventable diseases is good’ is about another type

⁷Dodd (2002b: 284) presents a similar argument against TT being necessary for realism.

⁸This captures in essence the argument from Beebe and Dodd (2005a: 16), which I presented in §6.2. Also they argue, more concisely than I do here, that “[t]he truthmaker principle seems to be neither sufficient nor necessary for realism” (ibid.: 7–8).

of action and its goodness. All of these truths seem to be about specific entities and how things are with these entities. The specific sketch of the TMKs for any of these TBRs might not be the right sketch. This will depend on what *the best semantic theory of what these truths, if they are indeed truths, are about* says they are about.

But from this overall sketch, we might extract a workable, general principle capturing what I call Modest Realism:

MODEST REALISM (M-REAL): If TBR *p* is true and it is a positive truth, whatever *p* is strictly and fully about must be real and make true *p*.

As we saw with my discussion of disjunctive truths (see §2.4.2.4), not all of the entities and how things are with the entities need to be real. In the case of disjunctive truths, only what one of the disjuncts is fully and strictly about needs to be real. Also, as should be clear, what I mean with “must be real” is just that the TMKs have *being* (in the way sketched in §1.2.2 and §4). This is a modest claim about the *reality* of TMKs. And, I think it is compatible with most anti-realist views as well as realist views. Most of these views can attempt to develop a metaphysically more detailed or substantial version of TAAT by providing an additional story about what the TBRs are *about* and by linking TBRs with TMKs in this way. As we saw in previous discussions, however, not all views are compatible; this includes realist views. TF, for example, can plausibly be construed as a *realist view of the world*. However, it falls foul of M-REAL. Most truths, specifically those truths *not about* fundamental reality, are made true by whatever they are about, not the fundamentalia which they may be related to in other ways. Such a view of TT is incompatible with M-REAL.⁹

7.3.1 M-REAL and Anti-Realism: *No Categorisation Error*

I end this section by spelling out how M-REAL is compatible with certain forms of anti-realism, even though this might already be clear to the reader, and explain why M-REAL is, hereby, not committing a categorisation error. In my discussion of Armstrong (§7.2.1), there were at least two forms of anti-realism that his account failed to categorise correctly: (1) error theories which deny the truth of a domain of discourse; and (2) theories which claim that the domain of discourse is *about* something radically different from what we thought it was about, as I think is the case with anti-realist theories such as pragmatism and idealism.

The former theory is compatible with M-REAL, because error theorists can consistently deny that a whole domain of discourse is true (or even truth-apt) while holding on to the idea that if such a domain of discourse did make true positive claims about the world, then one would have to accept the reality of its TMKs, that is, what the domain is *about*. We do not commit a categorisation error, because the error theorist is rightly

⁹In Appendix 5, I shall argue that certain forms of anti-realism can also be rejected on the basis of the fact that TAAT and M-REAL are both modest and intuitively plausible.

categorised as a sort of anti-realist even though the anti-realist can accept M-REAL. This is a good result.

Anti-realists of the latter sort will similarly give a story of the TMKs, but instead claim that they are very different from what we might initially have thought they are. They would have to argue that what *the best* SEM-TAC says *these truths* are about is different from what we thought they are about. As we saw in §2.4.1, discovering the best SEM-TAC is a complicated matter and in fact is most plausibly *not* what the folk think truths are about or what they seem to be about on first consideration. Thus M-REAL and TAAT are in fact very congenial to anti-realisms which provide *revisionary* or even *radical* accounts of what truths are about and what make them true, as long as their accounts are grounded in good evidence and can claim to be providing the best SEM-TAC.

These views would still be best labeled anti-realist because they deny the reality of what *we thought are the TMKs* for such truths, and instead accept the reality of other kinds of TMKs for such truths. For instance, an anti-realist can try to argue that the best semantics of ordinary claims, which are *apparently about* medium-sized dry goods cannot actually be about medium-sized dry goods, but are in fact about certain states of evidence or acts of verification. Or an intuitionist in mathematics, especially one following Brouwer (1924) and Heyting (1964), might argue that the right account of the TMKs for mathematical truths are proof-objects understood as mathematical constructions, the objects of acts of construction.¹⁰ These are all anti-realist accounts of a certain domain which accept the modest realism inherent in M-REAL. Thus, M-REAL is compatible with anti-realisms of different kinds. And instead of committing a categorisation error, we not only get the right results (that anti-realists are properly categorised as anti-realists), but with M-REAL we have a good workable way of distinguishing the anti-realist from the more substantial realist views, according to whether they provide radical or revisionary accounts of what the TBRs of a specific domain are about.

7.4 Modest Realism and Commonsense Realism

Liggins (2008: 182ff) has argued that Armstrong and TT-ists are best understood as appealing to what he calls “commonsense realism”,¹¹ which he describes as a “modest doctrine [since] it is compatible with the idealist claim that everything is mental”

¹⁰See (Sundholm 1994: 121–122) for a contemporary Brouwer-Heyting intuitionistic view of the TMKs. Thanks to Sundholm for making this clear to me in conversation and explaining to me the subtle distinctions which are of central importance to understanding the intuitionistic conception of meaning and truth.

¹¹It is important to note that Liggins does not mean what is normally meant by “commonsense realism.” Normally, as I understand it, a commonsense realist is realist about such things as physical objects and moral values; a commonsense realist is a realist in the sense that she takes whatever is part of our pre-theoretical folk conception of the world to be real. Liggins understands the term differently as should be clear when I present what he means in what follows.

(ibid.: 178). Liggins points out that commonsense realism is not the same as what he calls “physical object realism” (ibid.: 183). According to Liggins (ibid.: 183–185), because TT-ists accept *commonsense realism*, not *physical object realism*, the TT-ists’ arguments “do not beg the question” (ibid.: 185), contra Beebe and Dodd (2005a: 16). In fact, as Liggins also says, agreeing with what I have argued in the last section, “commonsense realism is compatible with error theory about any domain” (ibid.: 185). He sums up the distinction thus: “commonsense realism is a wide-ranging thesis about what determines the truth-value of propositions, whereas physical object realism is a thesis about the existence and mind-independence of physical objects” (ibid.). It is clear, then, that what Liggins calls “commonsense realism” is at least similar to M-REAL. M-REAL, however, is even more modest than commonsense realism, because it has modest commitments as to the nature of both TBRs and TMKs, not just TMKs. For instance, Liggins talks of propositions, whereas M-REAL would be neutral about the nature of TBRs (§1.3).

However, Liggins (ibid.: 185–186) argues that commonsense realism “lends no clear support to [TT]” (ibid.: 186). It will be illuminating to discuss Liggins’s argument. He sums up commonsense realism’s commitments thus: “So commonsense realists should embrace:

EXP[:] For every truth P , there is an explanation of why P is true.

Now there is a VIRTUE [which Liggins discusses as the principle meant to capture T-REL¹²] on which it is just another way of articulating EXP. On this reading of VIRTUE, commonsense realists should endorse it. But this principle is of no obvious use for motivating [TT]” (ibid.: 185). What Liggins has in mind are:

(V1) For every truth P , there is some entity o such that o determines that P is true.

(V2) For every truth P , there is some entity o such that o explains why P is true. [ibid.]

However, on these readings of VIRTUE, one might say that the truth *that the rose is red* is true in virtue of the rose. But, as Liggins rightly points out, this contradicts NECESSITARIANISM (NEC). What he thinks TT-ists have in mind is:

(V3) For every truth P , there is some entity o such that o ’s existence determines that P is true; or

(V4) For every truth P , there is some entity o such that o ’s existence explains why P is true. [ibid.: 186]

Liggins’s criticism is two-fold: (1) “Commonsense realists think that truth is determined by reality; but that does not mean that they should think that propositions owe their truth-values simply to what exists. It is more natural to think that there are propositions

¹²See §1.4 and Appendix 1 where I do the same.

which owe their truth-values not just to what exists but also to *how it is*—which properties it has and in what relations it stands" (ibid.); and (2) there is no good argument that *existential explanations* are the best explanations of truth, as is claimed by TT-ists such as Read (2000: 76) and Rodriguez-Pereyra (2005: §6).¹³

As is clear from my discussion in §4.1, I wholeheartedly agree with Liggins here concerning (1) and (2). Liggins, however, is equating TT with T-NEC. TAAT can get the result that the truth of the TBR 'the rose is red' is determined not just by the rose but by the rose being red, that is, *how things are* with the rose concerning one aspect of the rose, its colour properties. But one does not need NEC for this. One just needs strict and full aboutness (see §2.4). TT-ists are wrong when they try to build too much metaphysics into TT (see §4). Instead, insofar as commonsense realism is plausible and motivated, so is TAAT. In fact, TAAT and M-REAL are more plausible than commonsense realism. This is because M-REAL claims that truth is not just determined by reality (as commonsense realism claims), but truth is determined by the reality that the truths are strictly and fully *about* (according to the best SEM-TAC). Commonsense realism, at least as presented by Liggins, is less plausible, because commonsense realism is open to the criticisms I raised in §4, since both V1 and V2 require that "some entity *o*" (Liggins 2008: 185) determines or explains the truths in question. This is metaphysically too strong and far from commonsensical. The right version of TT is indeed motivated by the plausible, modest version of realism we get from TAAT and SAC.

As for (2), I agree with Liggins that *existential explanation* is not properly motivated and far from the *best* kind of explanation, as the other TT-ists he cites might claim. But, this is not a problem. For instance, Lewis (2001a: 611–612), in his discussion with C. B. Martin about TMKs for negative truths, makes clear that he thinks that TT doesn't need to give informative explanations, when he says,

[T]he proposition that there are no unicorns is true just because there are no unicorns! What sort of explanation is that?—No explanation at all, I agree. But who says that a Truthmaker Principle, whether weakened or not, must yield informative explanations? I say to Martin: *Tu quoque!* [...] The proposition that there is a cat is true just because there is a cat. What sort of explanation is that?—No explanation at all, and none the worse for that. [2001a: 611–612]

As MacBride (2005) has also made clear in his interpretative discussion of Lewis's version of TT, "the truth-making role is explanatorily thin" (MacBride 2005: 134). The reason why Lewis should be interpreted as thinking this is that, as Lewis and Rosen (2003: 39ff) argue, the TMK-role can be played just as effectively by "*qua*-versions of things as states of affairs" (MacBride ibid.).¹⁴ MacBride (ibid.: 136) points out that if SOAs are to be

¹³(Liggins ibid.)

¹⁴In Lewis's "*qua*-versions of things as states of affairs" the operator '*... qua F*' in '*a qua F*' is used to evoke the fine-grained counterpart relation which selects all the counterparts of *a* in all possible worlds where *a* is *F*. See (MacBride 2005: 129–131) for a thorough presentation of Lewis's view.

understood in Armstrong's way, then the TMKs are explanatorily robust because they are understood as structurally complex entities. Hence Armstrong demands an extravagant *existential explanation* out of TT. But, Lewis shows us a way of understanding SOAs as things-qua-properties, thinning the explanatory power of TT in a way that doesn't require an existential sort of explanation; SOAs understood in the Lewisian *qua-version* way are not *existing* entities over and above *things* and their relevant counterparts.

This kind of reasoning is compatible with TAAT. There is no reason to think that TT must be explanatorily robust in the way that the substantial metaphysicians such as Armstrong think it should be. As I remarked in my criticism of Schaffer in §5.4.1, TT must be at least *somewhat* explanatory or useful. However, I do not see any reason to think, as Liggins (2008: 185) does, that EXP should hold. Commonsense realism, in the way he presents it, seems to posit an explanatory relation between truths and what determines those truths. To put his discussion in context, Liggins (2008: §5) provides a sustained criticism of Rodriguez-Pereyra's (2005) attempt to account for the explanatory asymmetry in terms of grounding. Liggins sums up Rodriguez-Pereyra's move as: "the truth asymmetry obtains because the grounding relation is asymmetrical" (Liggins 2008: 188). Liggins's criticism is that the explanatory asymmetry of

EXPLANATORY ASYMMETRY (EA): ($\langle p \rangle$ is true because p) and not (p because $\langle p \rangle$ is true)

cannot be captured by understanding 'because' as picking out the grounding relation (ibid.: 189),¹⁵ nor does EA actually express claims about grounding (ibid.: 190–191).

I won't rehash his arguments. I agree with his criticisms of Rodriguez-Pereyra; though Liggins's conclusion is hesitant as he merely concludes that "Rodriguez-Pereyra's argument is [...] inconclusive" (ibid.: 191). I sympathise with Liggins that grounding relations cannot do the work he thinks they can (see my §5; though I explicitly do not engage with Rodriguez-Pereyra's version of TT in terms of grounding). However, my general response to Liggins is that TAAT does not require TT to account for any *explanatory* asymmetry. Whatever explanation-relation TAAT offers is indeed, following Lewis-MacBride, a thin one.¹⁶ However, as we have seen (see especially §2.5 and §2.7–2.9), TAAT does a better, more modest job of capturing the *asymmetric relation*

¹⁵As I said in a previous footnote (§1.2 fn. 3), the main argument, presented by Hornsby (2005: 41–42), is that 'because' is a sentential connective connecting sentences and hence not a predicate as it would be if it picks out the grounding relation. Dodd similarly points out that 'because' is "an *operator*, not a relational-expression" (2007: 397; original italics) and on this basis points out that the groundedness of truth, captured by ' $\langle p \rangle$ is true because p ', does not express a "grounding-relation" (ibid.: original italics). But, recall, I'm not addressing these TT-skeptical considerations.

¹⁶In fact, the modesty I sketched in §4.1 makes the explanation, if there is any, even thinner than that sketched by Lewis-MacBride. Instead of thinking of TMKs as entities at all, either as complex SOAs or Lewisian *qua-versions*, most TMKs can be understood as merely *things* and *how things are* with those things. This modest view allows us to drop commitment to entities corresponding to the modal machinery which Lewis relies on, such as a thing's counterparts in possible worlds which we hardly ever speak strictly about outside of the context of discussing counterpart theory or Lewis's views, making our explanations, if there indeed are any, even thinner.

between truths and reality than the more metaphysically substantial versions of TT do. I remain agnostic whether TAAT expresses any *explanatory relation*, and I reject the idea that it is a metaphysically substantial explanatory relation. I also remain agnostic as to whether an account of TAAT needs to capture any claims that can be made with the sentential connective ‘because’. There is a clear asymmetry between truths and reality when we understand the relation in terms of *aboutness*. Exactly how explanatory this and related theses such as M-REAL are is not my business to say here. It is clear however, that M-REAL does not require any *existential explanation*. At most it merely requires that truths are explained by the *being* of what we are strictly and fully talking about, which includes how things are with the things we are talking about. Again, this is a more modest and plausible version of realism than even what Liggins calls “commonsense realism.” And its plausibility does motivate at least the metaphysically modest version of TT that I favour.

7.5 TAAT and the Limits of NEUTRALISM: *A Critical Note on Finean and Yabloviaan Neutralism*

I do not stand alone in defending the kind of modest realism which I have been sketching and defending as a viable and plausible part of TT in this and the previous chapters. For instance, Kit Fine’s slogan of metaphysical neutrality is: “Truth is one thing, metaphysical status another” (2001: 3). Alston’s (1996) position, which he calls “alethic realism” or the “realist conception of truth” takes an extreme neutralist position, implying that alethic realism carries no worldly implications whatsoever when he writes, “*Though a particular realist or antirealist metaphysical position (of the sorts we have been considering) has implications for what propositions are true or false, they have no implications for what it is for a proposition to be true or false*” (ibid.: 78; his italics).¹⁷ These are both very strong statements of metaphysical neutralism tied to an avowed realist conception of truth and truthmaking.

The question which I want to very briefly explore in this section is: “To what extent can we remain neutral as to our metaphysical commitments?” In the build-up of my position, first from BATT to TAAT, and then to M-REAL, I explicated an understanding of T-REL which explicitly remains neutral about the *metaphysical nature* of both TBRs (§1.3) and TMKs (§1.7). My answer to the question then is that if my account has

¹⁷Although I do not discuss Alston’s view any further in the main body of the dissertation, I extensively discuss his extreme neutralism, contrasting it with the modest neutralism of M-REAL, in Appendix 6. Alston’s view on truth is, in the historical scheme of things, one of the views that my view is most similar to. My comparison of our views foreshadows areas of potential future research. For example, there I briefly discuss how M-REAL engages with and stands in regard to the question of the importance of truth. To properly treat this topic, I would have to engage more directly with the skeptic and truth-nihilist, with whom, as I pointed out in §0.2, I am not engaging here.

been plausible and feasible so far, TT-ists can be *maximally* neutral. All that M-REAL requires is that when there is positive truth of the relevant sort (e.g. existence-entailing, and positively about ways the world is), then there must be a TBR of some sort or the other which is made true, and there must be TMKs which it is about which make the TBR true. The extent to which there are any metaphysical commitments concerning either TBRs or especially TMKs depends purely on what they are about, according to the best semantic account of a TBR's aboutness.

Other avowed neutralists, as I now want to point out, have been somewhat less neutral. Yablo and Fine are two philosophers who similarly to me have written on *aboutness*, content, and the way that TT can inform a theory of these notions.¹⁸ They also similarly embrace what Fine calls the “*neutrality requirement* on subject matter,” “according to which it should not in general be possible to determine from the subject matter of a proposition (and the facts) whether or not the proposition is true” (2015c: 13). Articulating the same requirement, Yablo writes, “one should be able to understand what *S* is about while remaining ignorant of its truth-value” (2014: 45). Indeed I think that these quotations do capture a relevant notion of neutrality, which both these philosophers agree must be part of an account of *subject matter*.

However, Fine (2015c: 12–13) argues that Yablo's account violates the *neutrality requirement* (ibid.: 12) since Yablo also believes that, as Fine puts it, “the subject matter of *P*, i.e. *P* itself, will be true just in case one of its verifiers is actual, i.e. belongs to the actual world” (ibid.: 13). The main reason why Yablo violates neutrality, according to Fine, is that Yablo restricts TMKs ontologically to *actual* TMKs. In general, Fine wants to *reject* the relevance of a *possible worlds* analysis to understanding what the TMKs are for *all*, though not *any*, truths. Rather, worlds and world-sized TMKs are only one kind of TMK and are not relevant for all TMKs.

Fine's point against Yablo's neutrality is, I think, a powerful one. Despite a professed commitment to the neutrality requirement, Yablo's *framework* seems to bring in metaphysically substantial machinery given the role that *possible worlds*, however he construes them metaphysically, play in his understanding of truthmaking. If Fine is right, the general problem, it seems to me, is that despite some neutrality that is built into the *account*, there is not enough *neutrality* in the overall *framework*. This kind of neutrality—metaphysical neutrality even at the *framework level* of the theory—is something I have been at pains to ensure in my way of *going beyond* BATT.

However, Fine's own account might also not be in the clear. Though Fine is committed to *neutrality*, his discussion of the nature of what he calls “states” as TMKs is worrying in this regard. For he professes to take “such talk [about ways of being true] seriously [which involves] at least two elements. The first is that we recognize ‘ways’ of being true as objects in their own right. They are facts or fact-like entities that might reasonably [be] regarded as parts or aspects of a world. The second is that they stand in

¹⁸See my §2.4.2 for discussion and quotations.

a distinctive relation of ‘making true’ to sentences of which they are the ways of being true” (ibid.: 1–2). The latter can allow him to remain neutral, but, as we have seen in §4, such *metaphysical seriousness* about facts is distinctly not neutral.

The rationale behind committing oneself to a *neutrality requirement* when articulating a theory of *aboutness* and truth is that these are *semantic notions* and not *metaphysical* ones. Thus, a theory of truth, aboutness, and *truthmaking* that is more metaphysically neutral is preferable over ones that are less neutral. Despite a commitment to *neutrality*, as Yablo and Fine would agree, one should be careful not to build substantial, non-neutral commitments into one’s framework.

7.6 Conclusions of this Chapter

In conclusion, with TAAT, the TT-ist is able to focus purely on *aboutness* and can drop any metaphysically extravagant and question-begging commitments. But the TT-ist still has enough tools to object to the immodest realists, such as Armstrong and Bigelow, who think that metaphysically substantial theses follow from or are necessary for TT. Thus, I sketched some of the limits of our theorising about realism in §7.2–7.3.¹⁹ In §7.3, I argued that a modest and neutral version of realism, which I called M-REAL, does help motivate TT. In §7.4, I argued that M-REAL is even more plausible than commonsense realism (of the kind that Liggins discusses). And in §7.5, I sketched some of the limits of NEUTRALISM by briefly discussing Finean and Yabloian NEUTRALISM.

¹⁹I argue that some versions of anti-realism are incoherent and lead to regress on aboutness grounds in Appendix 5.

Chapter 8

Truthmaking and Inquiry: *Some Everyday Modesty*

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I shall argue that TT has a central role in articulating practically applicable steps of everyday, scientific inquiry. Specifically, I shall be presenting and defending a “two-step” conception of inquiry. The inquiry with which I am primarily concerned is ordinary inquiry, but what I say extends to all inquiry that is positively *about the world* broadly construed to involve at least all factual¹ matters as opposed to other matters such as fictional matters (see §6.5 for this contrast). First, in §8.2, I explain that some philosophers conflate truth-conditions² with TMKs, and draw consequences for *inquiry* based on this false starting point. In §8.3, I present my two-step conception and explain that the first step is to search for TMK-conditions, not truth-conditions. I then make important distinctions between TMKs and truth-conditions (§8.4.1), and between TMK-conditions and truth-conditions (in inquiry, §8.4.2; and in a theory of understanding, §8.4.4). However, I also argue, in §8.4.3, that TMK-conditions and truth-conditions sometimes come together. In §8.5, I shall present and criticise an alternative, orthodox conception of what it is to *know a claim’s TMKs*. I shall argue that knowing a claim’s TMKs does not require knowing the nature of its TMKs. This is another defence of my overall *metaphysically modest approach* to TT.

¹There is no commitment to facts involved here.

²I rely on a basic, intuitive understanding of the notion of truth-conditions, partly because I find it unnecessary, at least for my purposes, to discuss specific views of truth-conditions, which are highly varied. For instance, Davidson’s “extensional” approach to truth-conditions (see [Davidson 1967: 310ff; and 1984a]) is very different from a Lewis-style “intensional” approach (see [Lewis 1970: 23ff]) which identifies a TBR’s meaning with the set of possible worlds in which the TBRs are true. Though extremely interesting, I must leave a more detailed discussion of how different accounts affect my discussion for another time. See (Asay 2011: 63–71) for a more thorough treatment of the distinction between TMKs and truth-conditions in the context of Davidsonian vs Lewisian views.

8.2 Conflating Truth-Conditions with Accounting for TMKs

One of TT's central aims is to *contribute* to a theory of meaning, a theory of what meaning is and how TBRs³ acquire their meanings.⁴ Crucially, however, TT cannot provide a *full* theory of meaning. As I have sketched it so far with TAAT, what TT goes hand-in-hand with is *the best* SEM-TAC, which undoubtedly plays a part in a theory of meaning, but does not wholly constitute it. Other TT-ists are more ambitious than I am here. Fine (2015a, b, c) and Yablo (2014), for instance, are trying to articulate different systematic versions of TMK-semantics, and both are trying to use their respective versions to provide a comprehensive theory of content and partial content.

More generally, however, one might think that it is only by giving an account of how a TBR acquires its meaning that we can provide an account of what the truth-conditions are for the TBR in question. And it is only then that we can figure out whether 'is true' applies to it or not. One might think that accounting for what a TBR's possible TMKs are is intimately tied to providing an account of what the truth-conditions are for the TBR in question. As we shall see in this chapter, although the parallels also make them intimately connected, there are significant differences which will make us favour an account of inquiry in terms of TMK-conditions rather than truth-conditions.

Some philosophers take the intimate connection a step further and think that accounting for a TBR's truth-conditions just is accounting for a TBR's possible TMKs. Fox writes, "To spell out the truth-condition for an atomic claim is to spell out what constitutes its truthmaker" (1987: 204). Blackburn (1987: 52) also explicitly states that providing a TBR's truth-conditions gives us an account of what *makes* the TBR *true*. He says, "[T]he answer [to the problem of finding the fugitive fact] would be obtained by establishing the *truth-conditions* for such judgements. It would give us an 'account'

³A virtue of the neutrality about the nature of TBRs, which I sketched in §1.3 and have adopted ever since, is that I can talk solely about TBRs rather than sentences or propositions. By doing so, I side-step a few problems with identifying meaning with truth-conditions. For instance, there are other uses of language. Non-indicative sentences, and speech acts such as questions, orders, requests, and promises plausibly do not have truth-conditions; they aren't even truth-apt. Their purpose is to do something other than convey information about and make reports about the world. See (Austin 1962) and (Searle 1969) for an extensive overview. Instead, they might have what Smart (1984: 16–19) called *compliance conditions*. For example, 'Go to the store!' is an order which is complied with, if the person it is directed to goes to the store. Cf. (Parsons 2012) for a recent and extensive challenge to this orthodoxy about imperatives. By talking about mainly TBRs, and about all relevant linguistic categories as TBRs, without specifying which if any TBRs I think are primary, I can side-step any or most of these issues. TBRs are by definition truth-apt and are normally used to convey information *about* and describe the world.

⁴Yablo and Fine are other prominent examples. See §1.3–1.5, for more examples and detailed discussion and citations. Others think that TT is purely a *metaphysical enterprise*. See for instance Asay, who writes, "Here, now, is the proposal. Truthmaker theory is a metaphysical enterprise that gives an ontological accounting of the truths that we accept" (2011: 25). Though I agree that TT has *some*, though very *modest*, metaphysical *implications*, I obviously would disagree if one claims that TT is solely a metaphysical enterprise.

of the states of affairs in which their truth consists. Or of what it is that *makes* them true" (ibid.). Vision (2003) goes further and argues that

The prime target of our inquiry ought to be *truth*, however we arrive at that concept. If there are substantial, worldly truth-conditions for a proposition's *being true*, whether or not anyone says so, that should be the central concern of such a theory. That the conditions do not form a homogeneous class, each of whose members it is illuminating to call a 'fact', can be only of secondary importance under the circumstances. [ibid.: 141]

This is the conclusion of Vision's argument *against* Lewis's (2001b) position that we can forget about the correspondence theory (CT) and replace it with TT plus a redundancy theory of truth. Vision aims to subsume TT under CT. We shall not go into the details of their debate(s).⁵ But it is clear from what Fox, Blackburn, and Vision say that (1) some philosophers conflate accounting for a TBR's truth-conditions with accounting for a TBR's TMKs; and (2) there is a conception of the aims of inquiry as seeking *truth* ultimately via elucidating truth-conditions. Whatever role TT has to play in inquiry is subsumed by the role that truth-conditions play in inquiry. I shall argue that both of these are mistaken by (1) distinguishing truth-conditions from TMKs and from TMK-conditions; and (2) sketching an alternative conception of inquiry.

8.3 The Role of Truth in Inquiry: *The Two-Step Conception of Everyday Inquiry*

Let us first articulate the two-step version of everyday inquiry that I have in mind:

STEP ONE: We look at our claims in a given discourse and figure out what the TMK-conditions are for these claims.

STEP TWO: We investigate whether there are any of the right kinds of entities that would fulfill these conditions and try to discover if they are indeed how they are described to be.

CONCLUDING STEP: Based on our insights or findings in both steps one and two (and perhaps some background knowledge), we conclude that the discourse makes true or false claims about the world.

STEPS ONE and TWO mark two different steps in inquiry. In STEP ONE, we find out what the conditions are that would need to be fulfilled for the claims in question to be made true. We figure out what the claims entail the being of, for instance, some object Z and how things are with Z. In STEP TWO, we go out into the world and discover

⁵This is in the main part because Vision thinks that one of the main arguments against TT as a version of CT, which is that TMKs do not have to be homogeneous, misconstrues what is at the heart of CT. He writes: "It is difficult to see how the community of interest is destroyed merely by the lack of this sort of homogeneity among worldly truthmakers" (2003: 140). See my §1.5 for my arguments against thinking that TT is a version of CT.

whether or not *Z* exists and whether *Z* is the way described. If we want to mention TMKs, we can say that we first figure out what the potential TMKs are for the claims and then explore the world to discover whether there are such TMKs. To successfully accomplish STEP ONE, we must have a *modest understanding* of a TBR's TMKs, the entities that they are about and how things are with the entities. Extravagance will lead us astray, and shyness will be deficient. However, it is only in STEP TWO that we might need to go out into the world to attempt to learn more about what kinds of entities they are, what their nature is, and the *deep story* (if there is one) about what it is for entities to be the way they are described.

To take either step, we might need to have a good amount of background knowledge, including about the environment in which they apparently exist, and about the other entities with which they might or might not be related. Background knowledge is even essential to STEP ONE, since, to understand the claim in question, one will need to have gone out into the world and to have gained knowledge about many things, including about how one's language works.⁶ But, this additional step is not essential to inquiry as sketched in the two-step method, in the sense that it is not *part of the method* (see §2.4.2.2's discussion of collateral information). If we understand the TMK-conditions (understood modestly), we already have sufficient information to look for and potentially find the TMKs, even though it is only in STEP TWO that we look out in the world and discover whether the relevant entities exist and have the properties which we hypothesise they have.

Of course, this is not a *general theory of inquiry*. This is because within the two-step structure, the first step is itself an inquiry, about TMKs. Thus, the successful use of the two-step method presupposes that we already know how to engage in inquiry. But what I have described is a two-step *method* for engaging in a specific type of everyday scientific inquiry with *this* structure, where we presuppose at least a basic understanding of how to inquire more generally,⁷ and in particular an understanding of how to inquire

⁶One must not ignore the fact that there seems to be pre-linguistic learning, for most of us done in infancy and childhood, which is a type of learning prior to our simple two-step conception of inquiry. Pre-linguistic learning is a necessary step in our development which allows us to engage in the more complex two-step inquiry. This pre-linguistic learning involves only looking out into the world, for language is part of the world and is something that has to be learnt about as well. Once we learn language, we can *use* it for our more complex inquiring activities.

⁷Perhaps this understanding merely consists in the *ability* to inquire. But, having the ability to inquire, for instance because it is perfectly easy for one to do so, doesn't entail *knowing how* to inquire (see [Snowdon 2003: 11f] for examples which illustrate that the ability to *X* doesn't entail knowing how to *X*). I think that this basic understanding consists in some form of *propositional knowledge* about inquiry (see [ibid.: 26]). However, even if the two-step method presupposes propositional knowledge about inquiry more generally, this does not presuppose that we are able to articulate this knowledge, let alone give an account of how to inquire more generally (see [ibid.: 27f] for a general discussion of propositional knowledge in this vein). Also, it may be that no more general account of inquiry can be given. For instance the basic actions (see [ibid.: 12]) involved in inquiring about where Plato lived might be very different from the basic actions involved in an inquiry about how much energy it takes to create a Higgs boson. The two-step conception I sketch is just one way of structuring inquiry or going about inquiring, which happens to presuppose *some knowledge of how to inquire* more generally.

about what the TMK-conditions are for claims. In what follows, I try to make the latter clearer. I don't rule out other good methods with other structures, perhaps not involving TMKs or TMK-conditions. My presentation of this two-step account, however, should make it clear why this TT-based method of inquiry is an attractive one.

8.4 TMKs, TMK-conditions, and Truth-conditions

Questions arise concerning this two-step method of inquiry. What are TMK-conditions? Why not just say that STEP ONE can be achieved by understanding the truth-conditions of the claim in question? In this section, using TAAT/SAC, I distinguish between TMKs and TMK-conditions, on the one hand, and truth-conditions, on the other.

8.4.1 TMKs are not the same as either Truth-conditions or TMK-conditions

First, TMKs are not truth-conditions. TMKs are the things (and how things are with the things) that *make* TBRs *true*. When there is truthmaking, the result is that there is a *truth* that the TMKs make true. By contrast, the truth-conditions are the *conditions* that need to be fulfilled for the TBR to be true. So, the truth-conditions are the *conditions of truth*, while the TMKs are the *makers of truth*, that which fulfills the conditions with their truthmaking.

Here's another general reason why TMKs are not truth-conditions.⁸ All meaningful TBRs are directed at truth,⁹ are truth-apt, and can be used to try to say something true. Hence, all TBRs have truth-conditions, whether or not they are true. However, only true TBRs have TMKs. What links the two (truth-conditions and TMKs) is that they both need to be related to TBRs. Further, if a TBR has truth-conditions then it must also have TMK-conditions (conditions under which the TBR would be made true). When a TBR has both truth-conditions and TMK-conditions, it is still possible that neither of these conditions are satisfied, and hence the TBR may not have an actual TMK. In fact, some claims cannot be true; it is impossible for them to be true. These still have both truth-conditions and TMK-conditions even though both of these conditions cannot obtain and they do not have any possible TMKs.

8.4.2 TMK-conditions are not the same as Truth-conditions, and are better for STEP ONE

Second, although TMKs fulfill both truth-conditions and TMK-conditions when they make a TBR true, these are different conditions. Consider T10, T11, and T12:

⁸Dyke (2007: 33ff; 2008: 73–74) also raises this point.

⁹There are of course many meaningful sentences which are not directed at truth, and hence have neither truth-conditions nor TMKs, such as questions and orders. They might have satisfaction-conditions and satisfaction-makers or better, satisfiers.

T10: Some triangles are equiangular.

T11: Some triangles are equilateral.

T12: Some triangles each have equal vertex angles.

T10 and T11 have the same truth-conditions, are true in all the same possible worlds and when exactly the same conditions obtain. And, they are necessarily equivalent. Necessarily, the plurality of triangles that are equiangular are also equilateral, and vice versa. However, they have different TMKs. In addition to being *strictly about* the same triangles they are also *strictly about two different* properties, or rather, they are strictly about *two different ways things* are with these triangles. T10 is strictly and fully about some triangles being equiangular, and thus involves those triangles *and* the property of *being equiangular*. And T11 is strictly and fully about some triangles being equilateral, and thus involves the same triangles *and* another property, the property of *being equilateral*. Thus, T10 and T11 have the same truth-conditions but different TMK-conditions.¹⁰ They are strictly and fully about different things (and how things are with those things).¹¹

However, T10 and T12 have the same truth-conditions and also the same TMK-conditions. This is because T10 and T12 are strictly and fully about the same triangles and the same way things are with those triangles, that is, exactly the same properties. These properties just happen to be talked about differently.

¹⁰I want to raise and dispel a potential objection in this footnote, not to get bogged down in the main body. This is that one might object, as a Davidsonian would, by explaining that in fact T10 and T11 have different truth-conditions even though they are provably equivalent.

The point I made and the example I used to say that T10 and T11 have the same truth-conditions, I think, raise a problem, analogous to and perhaps stronger than the one that Glock calls the problem of “rogue T-sentences” (2003: 234) for Davidsonian theories of meaning in terms of truth-theories. On such theories the meaning of ‘snow is white’ is captured by the biconditional: ‘snow is white’ is true iff snow is white. But since ‘is true iff’ is extensional, we have T-sentences which are true but do not capture the meaning of the quoted object language sentence. For instance, ‘Schnee ist weiss’ is true iff snow is white’ is a true T-sentence and so is ‘Schnee ist weiss’ is true iff grass is green’. Davidsonians who address the problem of rogue T-sentences might also be able to address the issue I raise concerning what we might call necessarily co-extensive rogue sentences. In doing so, they might claim that in fact these rogue T-sentences do not give the truth-conditions for ‘Schnee ist weiss’ and similarly, ‘T10 is true iff some triangles are equilateral’ does not give the truth-conditions for T10. A Davidsonian, for instance, might claim that the rogue T-sentences are not *semantically relevant* and hence do not give the truth-conditions.

Davidson himself addresses the problem of rogue T-sentences by saying that the relevant T-sentences which give the truth-conditions must not only be true but lawlike (1967: 26). See (Kölbel 2001: 616–618) and (Segal 1999: 48–58) for further discussion of alternative Davidsonian replies including to the necessarily and provably co-extensive rogue T-sentences problem.

But, the important point for us is this. The notion of *semantic relevance* is invoked to explain why ‘T10 is true iff some triangles are equiangular’ and ‘T10 is true iff some triangles are equilateral’ provide different truth-conditions, and to explain how T10 and T11 have, strictly speaking, different truth-conditions. However this notion is spelled out (e.g., by invoking *being lawlike*), the differences in truth-conditions will not be made on the basis of their having different TMKs or TMK-conditions. Thus, the distinction I make here on the basis of this example will still hold.

¹¹Mark Jago, who has been working together with Kit Fine on developing a TMK-semantics, raised a similar point and said that thinking of content in terms of TMK-conditions gives one a “route to hyperintensionality” See (Jago 2015: §2). However, I rely on no particular understanding of the difference between *being equilateral* and *being equiangular* except that there is such a difference.

Although all three are equivalent and have the same truth-conditions, T11 differs from T10 and T12 in that it has different TMK-conditions, and is *about* different things and how things are with those things.

I want to add also that one might say that TMK-conditions *cut more finely* into the fabric of reality than truth-conditions, and require more detailed distinctions in *being*. So, I would say that TMK-conditions are more important for inquiry than truth-conditions for STEP ONE. Even though knowing the truth-conditions for a claim in most cases comes together with knowing the TMK-conditions (e.g. with T10 and T12), this is not always the case (e.g. T10 and T11).

Also, it should be clear that given that I reject T-M, I claim that not all truths require TMKs to be true. That means that some truths, such as negative truths, do not have TMK-conditions. They do have truth-conditions however. This is another way that they can be distinguished.

Clearly, TMK-conditions and truth-conditions are distinct if one has a simple theory of truth-conditions which merely revolves around ordinary biconditionals. The TMK-conditions differ from the truth-conditions for 'snow is white' if the biconditional 'snow is white' is true iff coal is black' counts as a satisfactory example of its truth-conditions.

But, one might respond by saying that this is clearly an inadequate theory of truth-conditions, especially if we think of them as closely tied to meaning (for instance, by either being determined by or determining meaning). One might think that we have to build more into the right account of truth-conditions. Then the distinction between them and TMK-conditions might not be quite so simple as I have sketched it to be.

My response is just that there are many ways that one can go about building more detail into what would be a more substantive account of truth-conditions. (See fn. 10 in this section for a discussion of one such account.) Which details one builds into such an account is crucial, however. If one builds in just those details which I have explained give us TMK-conditions, then there is no need to draw a distinction.

However, I can imagine that there are plenty of reasons why one wouldn't want to give an account of truth-conditions that just mirrors my account of TMK-conditions. For one, TMK-conditions are determined by what TBRs are *about*. What a TBR is *about* might not fully capture what a TBR *means* (though, I think that *aboutness* is semantic, and hence plays *some* part in determining meaning). One might think that a truth-conditional theory of meaning cannot just be determined by the best semantic theory of TBR-aboutness. Of course, one might actually want to build such an account of meaning, in which case they are not distinct. However, it is not my task to settle what is the right theory of meaning, nor whether the right truth-conditional theory of meaning is just a TMK-conditional theory of meaning. Whatever account turns out to be the right one, it is clear that an account of TMK-conditions is different from many standard accounts of truth-conditions, not least the simple biconditional account.

8.4.3 The TAAT-ist theory of TMK-conditions is a Modest Theory of TMK-conditions

Third, my theory of TMK-conditions in terms of TAAT should be a *modest theory* of TMK-conditions. Let us consider the case of moral claims. Consider T41,

T41: It is wrong to kill innocent babies.

We might elucidate the truth-conditions for T41 homophonically thus:

T41 is true iff it is wrong to kill innocent babies.

In normal discussions of TMKs, this truth would standardly be thought to be made true potentially in a variety of ways. For example, T41 can be made true by there being moral absolutes or universals, by there being a God, by our natures as rational agents being a specific morality-allowing way, by the nature of biological life being a specific way, etc. According to TAAT however, none of these aspects of the world, if there are indeed such aspects, are potential TMKs for T41. If they are TMKs, they are only TMKs derivatively or indirectly. These aspects of the world are only TMKs if the wrongness of killing innocent babies is *identical* to any of these many aspects of the world. For example, there being moral absolutes or universals is only relevant for the truth of T41 if one of those moral absolutes or universals is *identical* to the wrongness of killing innocent babies. Let us now imagine that it is at least in part because there is a God that killing innocent babies is wrong. Even if this is the case, unless there being a God is identical to the wrongness of killing innocent babies, then I do not think that it is a TMK for that TBR. They are *about* different things. The fact that there is a God may be related to the TMK for T41 by a further explanatory relation but it itself does not look like a good candidate for being such a TMK. Thus, in such a case, the truth-conditions, captured by the right-hand side of the elucidation of the truth-conditions above, seem to come together with the TMK-conditions.

This is an attractive result of the modest theory of TMK-conditions, because there are many attractions to capturing the meaning of TBRs in terms of truth-conditions, including semantic parsimony.¹² So, since TMK-conditions and truth-conditions come together in the majority of the cases, I hypothesise that whatever benefits we have of capturing a TBR's meaning in terms of its truth-conditions is also captured by capturing the TBR's meaning in terms of its TMK-conditions.

8.4.4 TMK-conditions vs Truth-conditions in a Theory of Understanding TBRs: *More Modesty and Some Exactness*

Fourth, there is another important way that TMK-conditions and truth-conditions do not come together. Consider another TBR,

¹²See (Speaks 2014: especially §2.2.1) for a discussion of parsimony in a theory of meaning and why a Davidsonian truth-conditional theory of meaning is more parsimonious than the alternatives, such as accounts in terms of propositions, intensions, or Fregean senses.

T42: There are humans on planet Earth.

One can, presumably, know exactly and fully what T42 means without knowing all the TMKs that currently make it true, let alone all the things that could possibly make it true. However, what is it to *know all the* TMKs that currently make it true? Is knowing all the TMKs that currently and possibly make T42 true the same as knowing what the TMK-conditions are for T42?

Perhaps to know all the possible TMKs for T42, one would need to know all the possible ways that something can be human and on planet Earth. I think that this is an implausible way to understand what knowing a TBR's TMK-conditions amounts to. There are potentially infinitely many ways that something can be human and be on planet Earth. For example, one can, while living on planet Earth, be born of human parents in a normal way. This way of being a human might for example exclude the possibility of being injected with walrus genes as an embryo. One might also be human by being transformed into a human by God from one of God's ribs. One can also be human and have most of the physical parts of every other human but have a slight genetic deformation and have only half a "normal" brain. Such a human would perhaps require a little more effort than other full-brained humans to perform the same behaviours, but such a human would be human nonetheless. These are all ways that humans can be on planet Earth. However, all these ways of being human are not *strictly relevant* for the truth of T42. As long as the humans who are humans in their different ways *exist* and *are human*, and are on planet Earth (whatever way they got here), each of them and the *relevant* way they are are enough for them to be TMKs for T42. The rest of the information about them is *extraneous* and the other ways they are are not directly relevant. Thus, I can perfectly well and fully know the meaning of the TBRs, and also the TMK-conditions of the TBRs, without knowing everything and all the facts about all their possible and actual TMKs.

As another example, consider

T43: There are humans in space.

One can know what T43 means without knowing that Joey is one of the humans in space that makes true this TBR. In fact, that *Joey* is one of the TMKs is also not strictly relevant. Though he is a TMK for T43, to use Lewis's parlance, it is not *Joey-qua-Joey* (or *qua-referent-of-'Joey'*) that makes T43 true, but it is *Joey-qua-being-a-human-in-space* that makes T43 true. Thus, we must not only be modest by removing extraneous information from what we know when we know a TBR's TMK-conditions, but we must also be properly focused on exactly the relevant TMKs and exactly the relevant ways things are with the TMK-entities.

8.5 A Plea for Scientific Modesty

TMK-conditions cut reality more finely than truth-conditions. And they must be strictly and fully relevant for the truth of a TBR, making their level of detail much more exact. These make a search for them better suited for STEP ONE of the two-step method. So far, I have sketched some *correct* ways of drawing a distinction between truth-conditions on one hand and TMKs and TMK-conditions on the other.

In this final section, I shall describe and criticise a *wrong* way to distinguish between truth-conditions and TMKs. By doing so, I shall apply distinctions I made throughout the dissertation to overturn a final aspect of the general immodesty of the current TT-orthodoxy. While the previous attack on orthodoxy was centred on its extravagant *metaphysics*, I shall illustrate how philosophers have also been immodest in regard to *science*, specifically concerning what they think we know when we know a TBR's TMKs.

8.5.1 An Orthodox, but Wrong, Way to Distinguish Truth-conditions and TMKs

Other theorists, for example, Mellor (2009: especially 278–280), Dyke (2007: 33ff; and 2008: especially §2), Asay (2011: 62–71), Mulligan, Simons, and Smith (1984: 9ff), to name just an important few, also explicitly emphasise the distinction between TMKs and truth-conditions. However, I think that there is a tendency to draw the distinction in the *wrong* way. Specifically, the orthodoxy is that knowing a TBR's TMKs requires that we know substantially more information about the scientific nature of TMKs than would be required to know its truth-conditions. I think that this is captured by an oft-quoted passage from Mulligan et al.'s influential article, in which they write,

A knowledge of truth-conditions takes us at most one step towards reality: one can, surely, *envisage understanding a sentence (knowing its meaning), whilst at the same time having only partial knowledge of the nature of its possible truth-makers*. Those who used the term 'hepatitis' before the discovery of its varieties did not fail to understand the term; they were simply (partly) ignorant about hepatitis. That the investigation of what makes a particular sentence true is thus fundamentally an empirical, not a philosophical one, is not belied by the fact that for many sentences we can pick out the relevant truth-makers by nominalisation. There is, in the general case, no cheap and easy way to determine the truth-makers even of simple descriptive sentences via linguistic transformations. [1984: 299; my emphasis]

They claim that we can know and understand what a TBR means, and thereby know what its truth-conditions are, without knowing much about what the TMKs would be if the TBR is true. I take this to be generally true, and there are plenty of examples to capture this discrepancy. If we accept that a TBR's meaning is elucidated by its truth-conditions, the general point that Mulligan et al. are making is right and is captured by my

distinction between TMK-conditions and truth-conditions. In my way of understanding things one might say that *the best semantic theory of what a truth is about* is perhaps not the same as *the best semantic theory of what a truth means*.

However, a few questions arise: (1) how much must one know of a TBR's TMKs to be able to know what a TBR means?; and (2) how much does one need to know about any particular TMKs to know that it is one of the TMKs of the particular truths that they make true? Mulligan et al. seem to think that the answer to (1) is "hardly much," but that the answer to (2) is "a lot."

Mulligan et al. might argue for these answers in the following way. There are plenty of everyday terms in our language, of which we only *roughly* know the meanings, but which we regularly use in true (and false) TBRs. Consider:

T44: Jack is mean-spirited.

T45: The chair is made of plastic.

T44 just means that Jack is mean-spirited. Let us say that one grasps the truth-conditions of this TBR (which can be stated thus: 'T44 is true iff Jack is mean-spirited'), and is able to use the TBR appropriately, such as in conversation and in inferences.¹³ However, as the orthodox view goes, one may still be mostly ignorant of what makes the TBR true; what makes the TBR true may be a rather complicated set of dispositional states far beyond one's comprehension.

The truth-conditions for T45 might be: 'T45 is true iff the chair is made of plastic'. One may be able to use T45 appropriately in conversation and have a grasp of its truth-conditions, but have only a very vague idea of what plastic is. This is the case even when we put the truth-conditions in another way, for example, in a non-homophonic form: 'T45 is true iff the chair is made out of a synthetic material that can easily be moulded into objects such as chairs'. As the orthodox story might go, there is a contrast between even such a specification of the truth-conditions and the TMKs. At least one of the TMKs for this TBR might be a fact whose constituent parts are rather complicated¹⁴ or the TMK might be a set of extremely complicated *empirical* facts about the chair's chemical composition. On their account, the complications required for an account of the TMKs go far beyond the complications necessary for stating the TBR's truth-conditions.

A result of this view is that we do not know what the TMKs are for many claims that we use competently every day. And, it means that in the 17th century, for instance, we knew a lot less about TMKs than we do now. To find out more about the TMKs, according to the orthodox view, one would have to engage in further investigation. For

¹³Mere understanding does not yield the capacity to take part in a conversation. Taking part and engaging competently requires more than simply understanding the words and the truth-conditions of the TBRs being used. For example, it requires such understanding plus a sense of how the speaker or hearer will respond to the remark, an understanding of what is appropriate conversationally.

¹⁴Ignore the fact that Mulligan et al. think that the nature of TMKs are not facts but what they call "moments" (see especially [1984: §3]), which for all that matters for us are just PAPs.

example, even to understand what to look for, one would probably have to look up the various different kinds of plastic in industrial engineering manuals or one would have to do one's own detailed empirical investigations into the nature of plastics. Thus, one can have a perfectly good grasp of a TBR's truth-conditions and be able to use the TBR appropriately, while at the same time being mostly ignorant of the various things about the world that make the TBR true; that is, one might be mostly ignorant of its TMKs.

8.5.2 Why Modesty is Preferable to Orthodoxy

The central problem with the orthodox view is that it seems to be conflating *full knowledge* of TMKs-*qua-entities* with *knowledge* of TMKs-*qua-TMKs*. One can perfectly well know the TMKs for T44 and T45, or for the TBR *that Jack has hepatitis*, without knowing the things that the orthodox view requires one to know in order to know the TMKs for these TBRs. For example, one can know the TMKs for T44 even if one is mostly ignorant about all the specific dispositional states and mental states which constitute mean-spiritedness. One can know the TMKs for T45 even if one is mostly ignorant about what exactly constitutes being plastic. And in the case of their own example, one can know and understand that Jack has hepatitis even if one is mostly ignorant about the extremely various kinds of hepatitis one can have and discover. Let me explain.

If one understands what 'mean-spirited' and 'plastic' and 'hepatitis' mean, presumably one would be able to identify when such terms are used correctly and when they are not used correctly, at least in a reasonable amount of cases. Linguistic competence with those terms requires that one is able to identify, at least in some cases, when those terms apply to things, and thus one needs to know at least some of its (possible) TMKs. For instance, one needs to know that 'plastic' designates plastic. This is important information that one needs to be able to generate and understand the TMK-conditions of a TBR which uses the term. One can know that 'plastic' is the name of *this* stuff without knowing much about the stuff. One does not need to know much, let alone everything, about the nature of plastic to know and understand that a table is made out of plastic and that its being plastic is what makes T45 true.

Further, what this argument indicates is that the orthodox view is conflating material analysis and scientific discovery of the nature of things with the needs of TT. Perhaps in certain cases, a fuller explanation of a TBR's TMKs requires us to know, discover, and provide an explanation in terms of the exact material nature of the TMKs, such as when a TBR specifies the exact material nature of some substance. But, this is not always the case. A modest TMK-explanation does not require that we provide *all* the information about the TMKs involved. Let us illustrate this with a simple example. Compare:

T46: I am drinking a mixture of Diet Coke and Coke Zero at the moment and Diet Coke is different from Coke Zero in that it contains citric acid as one of its ingredients while Coke Zero contains no citric acid.

T47: I am drinking a mixture of Diet Coke and Coke Zero right now.

T46 provides more information in terms of the differences in ingredients and chemical composition between Coke Zero and Diet Coke than T47. T46, hence, is about more things and how things are with those things, and as a result requires more TMKs. To understand and know T46, one is required to understand and know at least that Coke Zero and Diet Coke are different drinks and that one or the other could possibly contain citric acid. But, I can know what the TMKs for T47 are, even if I lived in a time before the Coca Cola Company was forced by law to reveal the ingredients of its various products. Hence, I can know what the TMKs for T47 are, even if I did not know that citric acid is one of the ingredients of Diet Coke. The TMK for this truth (T47) is *my right now drinking a mixture of Diet Coke and Coke Zero*. I can be acquainted with and know about this TMK *completely adequately* just by drinking the mixture and knowing that I am drinking this mixture (rather than, say, the mixture of Diet Coke and Sprite).

But this specification of the TMKs and what we might say are its TMK-conditions is importantly very similar to the *truth-conditions* for T47. To understand the TBR and to know its truth-conditions, all I need to know is that T47 is true iff I am right now drinking a mixture of Diet Coke and Coke Zero. The TMK-conditions for T47 are also similarly modest. One might know the TMK-conditions by, for instance, knowing that T47 is made true iff I am right now drinking a mixture of Diet Coke and Coke Zero. To know these *modest* TMK-conditions seems to me to be both necessary and sufficient for grasping the truth-conditions for this TBR. In this case, if one did not know the TMK-conditions for this TBR, then one could not grasp its truth-conditions, and grasping T47's truth-conditions seems sufficient for knowing its TMK-conditions. They are, in this case, the same!

T46 constitutes a TBR with more information about the nature of these TMKs of T47, but the TMK-conditions are importantly different. If knowing the TMK-conditions for T47 requires knowing and understanding the nature of the TMKs in a more substantial way than I illustrated, then one would expect the TMK-conditions for T47 and T46 to be the same. This, it seems to me, is what the orthodox account would require. But they are not the same. So, the orthodox account does not yield the right account of knowing a TBR's TMK-conditions.

It seems that truth-conditions on the one hand, and TMKs and TMK-conditions on the other hand, are much more intimately tied than the orthodoxy articulated by Mulligan et al. takes them to be. Specifically, an understanding of TMKs requires far less empirical knowledge about the nature of the TMKs than they seem to think is necessary. And given this, the TMK-conditions must also be appropriately modest in terms of the scientific and empirical knowledge required to grasp these conditions. The TMK-conditions must reflect what the TBR is strictly and fully about, and not also all the extraneous, collateral information concerning the *empirical nature* of the TMKs

involved. Although, as I have argued in §8.4–8.4.4, TMK-conditions and truth-conditions are distinct, they are not as different as the orthodox TT-ists think they are.

8.6 Conclusions of this Chapter

In this chapter, I have sketched some of the ways that TT can be used to clarify at least one kind of standard method of inquiry, what I presented as a two-step method of everyday inquiry (§8.3). To fill out the details of this two-step method, in §8.4–8.4.4, I sketched out some of the differences between TMKs and truth-conditions, and between truth-conditions and TMK-conditions. In §8.5, I argued that the connection between TMKs and truth-conditions is much closer than the orthodox TT-ist thinks it is. I argued that an understanding of TMKs (and hence TMK-conditions) requires far less empirical knowledge than it seems. This was a challenge to the orthodox view, and it constituted an additional plea for modesty concerning TT.

8.7 Conclusions of the Dissertation and Areas of Further Research

We are now at the end. I have argued that TT is important for philosophy, but only modestly so. The basic aim of TT is to give an account of the relation between truth and reality (T-REL). Every other task or application comes out of this first task. The overall structure of my argumentation was as follows.

First, in §1, I presented what I took to be the very basic requirements of TT, in a version of TT I called BATT. BATT laid out the very basic assumptions and tasks of any subsequent version of TT, which aims to *go beyond* it. I then explained that the version which captures the main tasks and assumptions of TT but moves beyond it in the most *modest* possible way, is the more plausible account. BATT and modesty favoured neutralism and pluralism concerning the nature of TBRs and TMKs, and required that any version of TT capture the general asymmetric dependence between truths and reality. However, I also pointed out that it was important not to beg the question against philosophical theories of very different inclinations, and that thereby BATT's pluralism resulted in its compatibility with a wide array of TT-accounts.

Then, in §2, I presented my favoured aboutness-based account (SAC) in detail, arguing that it was more attractive than other accounts of the nature of T-REL, such as T-ET and T-NEC. I explained how it is compatible with the basic assumptions and aims of BATT, how it can answer the lingering problem of negative truths (§3), and in what way its metaphysical modesty manifests itself (§4). Then, in §5, I argued that SAC is preferable to a metaphysically extravagant account such as Truthmaker Fundamentalism,

which violates some of the central requirements of BATT, and is generally riddled with structural issues.

Finally, I came to the task of addressing what the main applications of TT are. I argued that they have to be completely overhauled. Cheater-catching (CC-ing), as it has been understood in the literature, was infused with question-begging, metaphysically extravagant assumptions about the nature of TMKs. I argued, in §6, that SAC shows us that the CC-ing task should be understood much more modestly than previously thought, not as catching metaphysically dubious cheater theories, but as catching semantically dubious theories which make claims about the positive truth of X but deny that there are TMKs for X. Then, in §7, I argued that the most plausible version of realism that can be tied to TT is what I called Modest Realism, which in turn is compatible with anti-realisms of various sorts. In §8, I argued that we can use TT to sketch a useful two-step method of everyday inquiry. To help make this clear, I made distinctions between truth-conditions, TMKs, and TMK-conditions. All in all, I argued that SAC gives us the resources to present a theory of TT to rival metaphysically extravagant orthodoxy. I aimed not to address the TT-skeptic, but to re-invigorate an alternative conception of TT, which would be attractive to those who are swayed and driven first and perhaps foremost by MP, the modesty principle, with which I started the dissertation.

The running theme throughout has been an attempt to give the most modest possible account of TT. This resulted in a conception of TT which was more semantically driven than metaphysically driven, and which was as neutral as possible. This brings me to the question of where my overall project of giving such a modest account of TT will bring me in the future, in regard to areas of further research.

First, I made it explicit that I was not addressing the TT-skeptic. Since I have now presented what I take to be a novel theory of truthmaking and argued that it is more modest and hence more plausible than the best rival theories, the next step in my research is to see how far I can address the TT-skeptic head-on.

My starting point, I think, will be to address the issue of the importance of truth, and how TT can help to give an account of that importance. I go some way to sketch some of the issues relevant to this at the end of Appendix 5. There I also say more about how neutral SAC really is, by comparing it with Alston's realist conception of truth, which I explain is an *extreme neutralist* position. There is much more to be said about this, but I begin to explore some of those issues there. Also, in Appendix 1, I present a more in-depth discussion of the suggestion that there is no relation between truth and reality, via a discussion of Künne's distinction between an ontological and propositional reading of "Making True". My relations-come-easy view of relations (§1.4) addresses the distinction made there. However, there is a serious worry about how alternative accounts of the nature of truth and the nature of reality can reject the basic assumptions I make about even my modest view of TT. If even the best, most modest account of TT is incompatible with very important underlying assumptions about the nature of truth or

perhaps about the nature of reality, then there might be no hope for the TT-ist to address the skeptic. I shall investigate this further.

Second, even though I have attempted to give a more semantics-focused account of TT, there is a lingering set of questions to do with the relation between TT and semantics more generally, and specifically, about whether TT can contribute to a theory of meaning, perhaps via a full-blown TMK-semantics. I go some way to start addressing some of these issues in Appendix 2, where I distinguish further between content-making and truthmaking, and in Appendix 3, where I go some way into presenting what I call Sameness and Exact Similarity Criteria for both TBRs and TMKs.

Third, there are lingering questions about the limits of neutrality and modesty. For instance, are all accounts of anti-realism compatible with my approach? In Appendix 5, I start investigating this and go some way into arguing that at least one version of anti-realism, that is, an evidence-based version of anti-realism turns out to be incoherent and open to regress on the basis of aboutness grounds. Finally, one may wonder whether my account of SAC's metaphysical modesty is in fact compatible with categorial pluralism and nominalism. In Appendix 4, I address this by asking the question: 'Is SAC a form of word magic?', where word magic arguments are a version of nominalist argument, wielded by philosophers such as Musgrave (2009). I argue there that *ways entities are* and *can be* should be understood pleonastically, but that this can be done in a metaphysically modest way. In fact, not only is SAC not susceptible to word magic, but SAC can be used to understand what it is to be guilty of word magic.

All in all, the project that I presented yields many avenues of further research. And I hope that the dissertation has convincingly illustrated that the first, modest steps to articulating the project are very attractive. There is still much work to do in the future – progress in philosophy is, in my view, steady, but hard to come by – but hopefully I have already gone some way to making this sense of progress, on especially the matter of the modest importance of the relation between truth and reality, vivid and real.

Appendices

Appendix 1: VIRTUE, Dummett's Principle C, and Künne's Schema P

This first appendix can be seen to be an inessential but interesting supplement to the points made especially in §1.4 concerning the question of whether BATT requires that truthmaking is a relation at all.

My understanding of TT and BATT is inclusive and includes all views which accept a commitment to T-REL, there being a generally asymmetric relation between truths and reality. These views thus need not speak *explicitly* about truthmaking. Just for the sake of clarity, I want to discuss a related way of understanding truth and its relation to reality. Dummett's Principle C is:

Principle C: If a statement is true, there must be something in virtue of which it is true.¹⁵

I follow, among others, Sundholm who states that Dummett's Principle C ('C' is short for 'correspondence') is "clearly nothing but a formulation of a truth-maker condition on truth" (1994: 123–4). I take it that Dummett's VIRTUE relation is just a version of what I call T-REL. Of course, I am not committing myself to thinking that VIRTUE is the right way to characterise T-REL. Künne (2003: 150) discusses Principle C and in the context of explaining or summarising what Aristotle says on these issues, states that "the general point can be captured by

(SCHEMA P): If *the statement that p* is true, then *it* is true because p." [ibid.: 150]

Künne (2003: 148–174) nicely points out various different ways of interpreting Principle C and Schema P, sketching what he calls the "Varieties of Making True," implying that these principles are each a variety of TT. Although he discusses many theories and many ways of drawing the lines, he distinguishes, most fruitfully, between the "*propositional reading*" (ibid.: 154–157, 165–169) and the "*ontic reading*" (ibid.: 158–165). The basic difference between the two comes down to how one reads 'virtue' and 'because'. Neither reading understands them in terms of a causal connection or causal explanation (ibid.: 154). But the first, propositional reading, understands them in terms of what Künne (ibid.: 155) calls "*conceptual explanation*." He writes,

¹⁵(Dummett 1976: 53). For extended discussion see (ibid.: 51–55).

This is the 'because' of *conceptual explanation*: the second part of (R*[: "He is your first cousin because he is a child of a sibling of one of your parents" (ibid.)]) elucidates the sense of the first part. If we take the use of 'make' which is exemplified by (R[: "He is a child of a sibling of one of your parents, which makes him your first cousin." (ibid.: 154)]) as our model for understanding philosophical pronouncements like (S) The fact that snow is white makes the statement that snow is white true, then they do not affirm a relation of any kind between a truth vehicle and something in the world. [ibid.: 155]

Künne clearly thinks here that the key terms that one can use to try to articulate TT and what Dummett calls Principle C can be interpreted in such a way that they do not commit themselves to the existence of *any relation* between TBRs and TMKs. However, he clearly thinks that this is a version of TT.

Despite what he says here however, it is clear that Künne thinks that these accounts are inadequate¹⁶ and that, as he says, "'makes true' signifies an asymmetrical relation" (ibid.: 155). He discusses Rundle (1979: 345–8) as a supporter of the "no relation" claim. Künne writes,

I disagree with him, however, on one point. In claiming that the fact that *p* makes it true that *p*, Rundle contends, we affirm 'no more than a deductive connection between one proposition and another' (348). This cannot be the whole story, for the entailment between '*p*' and 'It is true that *p*' runs in both directions, whereas 'makes true' signifies an asymmetrical relation. [ibid.]

Künne makes clear in this discussion that any attempt to give an account of 'makes true' in this non-relational way must capture the features of 'makes true' as signified in the relational way. In particular, an attempt must be made to capture the asymmetry between '*p*' and 'it is true that *p*'. The accounts that he discusses in this context are Horwich (1998: 105) and Wright (1992: 27), who both try to account for the *explanatory dependence* between '*p*' and 'it is true that *p*' in a non-relational way. Presumably, then, the reason why there is no relation that *needs* positing between TMK and TBR making room for a "propositional reading" of 'VIRTUE' and 'BECAUSE' is that this reading gives at least two options for the TT-ist: (1) explain these notions by articulating what the *explanatory dependence* is between true TBRs and TMKs or (2) interpret these notions

¹⁶In particular, he criticises especially Horwich (1998: 105) and Wright's (1992: 27) accounts as "not very illuminating" (ibid.: 157). The latter tries to account for the 'because' in SCHEMA P and instances of it such as "*the statement that snow is white is true because snow is white*" (this is Künne's example on [ibid.: 155]) by, as Künne writes, "appealing to the 'platitude' that *P is true if and only if things are as P says they are*" (ibid.: 157), and as Wright writes, "whence, given [the platitude], the truth of the proposition that [snow is white] can quite properly be explained by citing the fact that [snow is white]" (Wright 1992: 27; Künne's insertion of '[the platitude]'). Künne claims that "this is not very illuminating" (ibid.) and that this is "glaringly obvious if [...] to claim that things are as *P* says they are just is to claim that *P* is true [as he argues in a later chapter]" (ibid.: 157; his emphasis on 'is'). I will not go into Künne's arguments any deeper than this, as it is unnecessary for my purposes.

in some sort of *logical way*, in terms of entailment or a “deductive connection” (as Rundle does).

Künne has deeper reasons, which we do not have space to get into, concerning the nature of *relations* and of *explanation* for thinking that this reading of VIRTUE and Principle C as *conceptual explanation* via accounts of explanatory dependence and logical notions allows the TT-ist not to affirm that there is some sort of relation involved in truthmaking and making true. However, for the purposes of what I have said in the dissertation, I shall assume that Künne can be interpreted as meaning merely that there is no need to posit a relation of a *certain special sort* (e.g. between physical or otherwise worldly, non-propositional, non-TBR entities and TBRs). The contrast is with what he calls the “non-propositional” or “ontic reading” (ibid.: 158–165). To narrow down this latter reading he writes: “the ‘because’ is neither that of causal explanation nor that of theoretical reduction nor that of conceptual explanation. It could be called the ‘because’ of *ontological grounding*” (ibid.: 162; his emphasis). The way that I suggest that we should draw the line between the two readings is according to the different kind of *relations* involved. On the one hand, the *propositional reading* does not claim that there is no relation, rather it claims that the relation is between truths where only other truths (true TBRs) can play the role of TMKs and hence the relation can be logical rather than metaphysical. On the other hand, on the *ontic reading* the relation *can* relate TBRs with non-TBRs as TMKs.

But something I want to make absolutely clear is that, with the relations-come-easy view, I want to assume also that even the propositional reading accepts T-REL, and instead of rejecting T-REL, tries to account for T-REL with a relation that relates TBRs and TBRs-as-TMKs. Of course, the “propositional reading” TT-ist who either thinks that there are no relations at all (e.g. by arguing that they are reducible to monadic properties) or who thinks that relations only relate worldly things and not propositions (or any other TBRs) will reject TT’s acceptance of T-REL as part of BATT. But, throughout the dissertation, I have assumed a more inclusive notion of ‘worldly’ whereby TBRs count as worldly, and I have taken a much more relaxed attitude towards properties and relations, one that takes the attitude that relations come easy (see §1.4).

What I said about the relations-come-easy view of relations makes TT compatible with at least one reading of Dummett’s Principle C, VIRTUE, and Schema P, namely the “ontic reading.” But, as I hope to have explained, if we accept this view of relations, the requirement that TT accounts for T-REL is also compatible with what Künne calls the “propositional reading”, for conceptual explanation also signifies *some sort of relation* between the explanans and explanandum. It should be clear, however, that the propositional reading is unacceptable to BATT-ists since it violates R-ROT (§1.2.1).

Appendix 2: *Making True vs Making Contentful*

In §2.5, I pointed out that A-REL and T-REL have complementary asymmetries going in opposite directions; they are dual relations. In §2.7, I argued that SAC can give us a broadly externalist theory of content, where contents depend on real and potential TMKs, and that this is congenial to TD, the asymmetric dependence between TMKs and TBRs. In this appendix I shall briefly address a potential worry for these aspects of my view.

One might argue that because TBRs depend for their content on TMKs, what one might call the primary TBRs¹⁷ (e.g. propositions or contents) also depend for their *existence* on TMKs. If this is the case, TBRs would depend on TMKs in other ways than truthmaking. They would not only depend for *truth*, but they would also depend for their existence on putative TMKs. So, as one might argue, dependence on the things in the world that TBRs are about is nothing special to truthmaking, and hence might not help clarify truthmaking. The dual role that A-REL and T-REL seem to play on my account seems to be in question.

The right response to this is that even though the content of the TBRs depend on the TMKs that the TBRs are about, and even though this dependence-for-content is a relation that relates TMKs to TBRs in the same asymmetric way that truthmaking does, it is *not* the same relation as T-REL, T-REL is the relation that gives *truth* to TBRs, while this other relation is a relation that gives content to TBRs. One might call it “Content-making” (C-REL); it captures the striking idea that there has to be something in virtue of which there is content, or, to put it in terms of making, there has to be something that *makes content*. Although C-REL is closely related to T-REL, it is not the same relation. It is important to keep these distinct.

In addition, without T-REL, and without a distinction between T-REL and C-REL, there would be no room for truths or falsehoods. Even if contents are indeed *made* in an asymmetric way via C-REL and by the very worldly beings and ways of being which

¹⁷Primary TBRs would be the TBRs in virtue of which all other potential TBRs are TBRs. For example, some think that sentences are not primary TBRs because they derive their status as TBRs from the contents that they express, what some call the *propositions* that they express. Sentences, on this account, are truth-apt because they express truth-apt content or propositions. I have been and remain neutral on this issue. I remain neutral as to what the primary TBRs are. This footnote is merely a reminder of my discussion in §1.3.

can also serve as TMKs, a distinction needs to be made between situations when the *contents* are made and situations when the *TBRs* are made *true* or situations when they are, instead, *false*. There is a distinct and important role that T-REL plays apart from C-REL, marking them as distinct relations.

Appendix 3: *Sameness and Exact Similarity Conditions for TMKs and TBRs*

One of the ways that our overall project can be extended in the future is by supplementing SAC with identification conditions for TMKs and TBRs. In Appendix 2, I argued that T-REL is distinct from C-REL (content-making) and, in §2.7, that SAC is a broadly externalist theory of content. In §2.9, my argument against NEC relied on the fact that TBRs can change their aboutness. As I discussed in §8.3, the proper use of the two-step method of everyday inquiry assumed, in its STEP ONE, at least a pre-theoretical understanding of how to identify TMKs. In this appendix, I extend all four discussions and give more precise identification conditions, in the form of what I call Sameness and Exact Similarity Conditions for both TMKs and TBRs. These conditions, so articulated, are not essential to my arguments in the dissertation. Instead, they take us a step forward in articulating conditions (1) which shed light on how my overall project will proceed in the future, and (2) which are part of the fuller articulation of SAC than what is necessary for the aims of this dissertation.

Strict and full aboutness can be used as part of the criteria for identifying which are the TMKs for specific TBRs. Understanding what the contents of the TBRs are, and understanding what the TBRs are about, allows one to be able to identify their TMKs. For example, understanding what T1 is about, that is, *that table*, allows one to be able to identify that the table is the TMK for T1. Also, understanding what TBRs are strictly and fully about can be crucial in identifying and distinguishing between the different TMKs which make true very similar but subtly different TBRs. This is clear for instance when we consider and come to understand the following two different TBRs:

T10: Some triangles are equiangular.

T11: Some triangles are equilateral.

These two TBRs are both made true in part by any triangle that is equiangular and any triangle that is equilateral (these can be the same triangle). However, strictly, they are also about two *different* properties. T10 is strictly and fully about some triangles being equiangular, and thus involves those triangles *and their being equiangular*, and T11 is strictly and fully about some triangles being equilateral, and thus involves the

same triangles and another property, the property of *being equilateral*. The truth of different TBRs asymmetrically depends on the existence of different things in the world and usually, especially in the case of non-existential TBRs, also how things are with those things. And identifying which things in the world make the TBRs true is aided by knowing what they are about. On these bases, I think that we have good grounds for trying to formulate criteria for identifying TBRs, since their truth-aptness-endowing contents are individuated by which TMKs they are strictly and fully about. To do this, we might give a Criterion for the Sameness (or Exact Similarity¹⁸) of TBRs. We might say:¹⁹

Criterion for TBR-Sameness-or-Exact-Similarity (TBR-Criterion): TBR p is the same or an exactly similar TBR as q at time t iff p and q are strictly and fully about and made true by all the same TMKs at time t .

For example, T10 is strictly and fully about the *same things* and the *same ways things are with those things* as

T12: Some triangles each have equal vertex angles.

The property *being equiangular* and the property *having equal vertex angles* is the same property. So, the TMKs which make these TBRs true are also the same TMKs.

However, we have to restrict identifying their sameness to a time because clearly what these TBRs are strictly and fully about can change over time.²⁰ This can happen in various ways. Most clearly this happens with changes in TMKs. For example some triangles which were equiangular might cease to exist or cease to be equiangular at another time. This happens frequently when one draws a triangle on a computer illustrator program and then changes the features of the triangle illustration, for example from an equiangular triangle to a non-equiangular triangle, with the simple clicking and dragging of the mouse. In this case, TBR p at time t is not strictly and fully about the same TMKs as p at some other time, but p is clearly still the same TBR at these different times. As we'll see, it is important that the aboutness of TBRs can change over time, and the criterion I have given is compatible with this.

Similarly, we might present criteria for TMK sameness or exact similarity:²¹

¹⁸I mention and include *exact similarity* here because philosophers of a non-Platonic persuasion who take properties to be modes or tropes would reject the idea that, say, the redness of one umbrella could ever be *self-same* or *identical* to the redness of another umbrella, even if their redness is *exactly similar*. See (Heil 2012: 93–95) and (Williams 1953: 5) for further discussion. One might think in a similar non-Platonic way about TMKs which sometimes involve the way things are, and even of TBRs.

¹⁹In presenting the identification criteria for TBRs in this way, I am inspired by the similar move made by Sundholm (1994: 118).

²⁰The same can be said of possible worlds, but I ignore talking about and relativising things to possible worlds because doing so would make things unnecessarily complicated.

²¹As should be clear, the following criterion allows us to reject or at least remain agnostic about whether TMKs are *entities*. I am not giving *identity-conditions* for TMKs since I remain pluralist, even

Criterion for TMK-Sameness-or-Exact-Similarity (TMK-Criterion): TMK α is the same as or exactly similar TMK-qua-TMKs as TMK β at time t iff α makes true all the same TBRs as β at time t .

If two TMKs make true different TBRs, it is clear that they would not be the same TMKs. For instance both Jack the giraffe and Jones the giraffe make true the TBR 'At least one giraffe exists', but only Jack makes true the TBR 'Jack the giraffe exists', and only Jones makes true 'Jones the giraffe exists'. It is clear that they are neither the same nor exactly similar TMKs and the above criterion helps us see this.

though the conditions I give can help us *identify* TMKs for TBRs. In particular, ways of being or how things are with entities are themselves not entities, but they are often part of TMKs for TBRs. Sameness and exact similarity conditions allow us to say things of the form: a way of being X is the same as (or exactly similar to) a way of being Y just in case some condition C obtains. This does not commit one to the view that *ways of being* are entities.

Appendix 4: Is SAC a Form of Word Magic?: A Nominalist Challenge to SAC's Metaphysical Modesty

In this appendix, which is a supplement to §4 and its presentation of metaphysical modesty, I want to address a possible worry about TMKs as I have construed them. Addressing this worry is not essential to my defence of metaphysical modesty, but goes into more detail in regard to my criticisms of metaphysical immodesty. My discussion in this appendix goes into further illuminating detail about (1) the way in which my account is metaphysically modest and (2) what kinds of views are cheaters. What I present here helps us see more of the details of my account and project, but it illuminates them in ways that go beyond what is necessary for the dissertation. In short, what I do is to defend SAC against one line of argumentation that the nominalist can press against the metaphysical modesty of the account. As I shall argue, nominalism is compatible with SAC and understanding the nominalist challenge properly adds support to my claim in §6 that metaphysical immodest accounts of TT should be seen as what I called extravagant cheaters.

Although I follow Lewis and Dodd in providing an interpretation of the *being* involved in TMKs as not constituting a commitment to any substantial metaphysical theses, one might still make the traditional charge that *nominalists* make against *realists concerning properties, states, events, etc.*, that I am trying to get away with what Musgrave calls “word magic” (Musgrave 2009: 69; 2001: 29), a kind of supernatural conjuring trick in which the introduction of a term in our language introduces an entity in the world. I shall present the case for understanding what word magic is. It should be clear that my charge, in §4.2, *against* Marcus and Steward (at least in the way she presents her conclusions in [1997]) can be interpreted as a version of Musgrave’s charge. This is because I have argued, in short, that their move from ‘*S* is talking about states and not events’ to ‘What *S* is talking about commits her to a metaphysically substantial view of states in ontologically categorial distinction from events’ is unwarranted by the semantic data that they have provided. However, Musgrave might claim that my own suggestions are open to the charge of word magic. For example, I still accept that we can talk about states and confuse talk about states with talk about events. This means that I accept *some*

sort of distinction between states and events, even if it is a (metaphysically neutral) distinction merely in the *ways of being* of objects rather than an ontological distinction in different kinds of entities. One might wonder: 'Is SAC committing some version of word magic?' I shall argue that this is not the case.

I have argued that one must understand what Mourelatos, Steward, Marcus, et al., are doing not as successfully establishing the metaphysically *substantial conclusions* that some of them presumably hope they are making. Rather, I think it is metaphysically innocuous to talk *about* states, events, processes, stuff (e.g. water and mercury), etc. However, it is only innocuous if one remains metaphysically neutral and one does not *build into talking about* states, events, processes, etc., a commitment to SOAs or other metaphysically substantial, complexly structured *entities*. For example, I claim that we can talk truly about a specific mental *state* of Margot (say, her happiness) without being committed to *there existing an entity: the happiness of Margot*. But what I say, for example, 'Margot's happiness filled the room with joy', will be *made true* by what I am talking about, specifically things really being such that Margot's happiness filled the room with joy, whatever Margot's happiness and the states of the room and the people in it are *ontologically*, whether or not all these states are entities over and above the people who are in the states. These states are minimally construed as just *how things are with the relevant entities* (Margot, the room, and the people in it). What I want to argue in this section is that Mourelatos, Steward, Marcus, and others' conclusions can and perhaps should be interpreted *pleonastically*. For instance, the nominalisations from T22 to T23 and T24 to T25 and T26, can be taken not to indicate any hidden substantial metaphysical quantification over entities in the non-nominalised T22 and T24, but rather can be taken to display a hidden commitment to innocuous parts of TMKs,²² construed as *ways things are* and *how things stand with things*, in the spirit of Lewis and Dodd. However, the pleonastic ontology of Schiffer (2003) and Thomasson (2001) is importantly different from this strategy since they consider pleonastic entities to be *entities*, though apparently *ontologically minimal ones*. Their ontological minimalism, I think Musgrave (2009: 69ff) is right to argue, is problematic and is a form of word magic. My strategy would be not to consider them *not to be entities*, as that would be to make a substantial metaphysical commitment to denying them this status, but to leave it open whether they are entities or merely *how things are with entities*.

Referring to how things are and talking about how things are does not commit one to the existence of *how things are*, as an entity in its own right. The fact that we can nominalise, quantify (either in a count or mass way), and refer-via-singular terms to different *ways of being* does not indicate that what we are speaking about are *substantial*

²²As should be clear already, since I've repeated this point several times now, I am not using 'parts' in the spatial sense, as in my arm is a part of my body. I think we can talk of *how things are with me* as a part of the TMKs which involve me as the substance without committing us to the existence of this part over and above my existence. If this talk of parts is too loose for the reader, then just think of me as writing 'aspect', 'ways', or 'how things are' instead of 'part'.

entities. We obviously talk about the TMKs and the parts of TMKs in the ways that we do, both by means of sentential-level referring terms (e.g. ‘the state of Margot’s love for Pim’) and by means of the various sub-sentential, referential vehicles we use to construct TBRs. But this does not indicate any *substantial metaphysical commitment* to the nature of TMKs. I think this is the right way forward for a plausible and sufficiently rich TT. TT must commit us only to what we talk *about* and the ways we talk about them must be rich enough that we can *accommodate* further investigation into what the TMKs are that is independent of TT-grounds. Any theory of TT which violates this is inadequate. And, it is my view that one of the main ways to violate this is to bring *substantial metaphysical commitments* into TT.

The following is a sketch of my overall reasoning in this appendix. I shall start by briefly presenting Musgrave’s (2001 and 2009) “word magic” argument. I shall argue that this argument is misdirected when applied to the kinds of transformations that Schiffer (2003) and Thomasson (2001) use to explicitly refer to properties, states, facts, events, etc., which they call “pleonastic entities.” However, I shall briefly point out that the misdirection is understandable and not misdirected when targeted at Schiffer and Thomasson’s own view, because they problematically talk about them as “language-created” *entities*, which suggest that they are *entities* with a substantial ontological status. But, the charge is misdirected in general because what these transformations allow us to do is make *explicit* our TMK-commitments to the various ways that entities are and not just the entities themselves. These TMK-commitments are kept largely *implicit* in the more commonly used TBRs of everyday use. However, these TMK-commitments are not ontological commitments. These transformations of common TBRs into TBRs that seem to make explicit reference to pleonastic *entities* merely reveal a reference to metaphysically innocuous *ways that things are* which are in part what serve as TMKs. Thus, I argue that explicit reference to such ways of being construed *pleonastically*, though not as *pleonastic entities*, does not constitute instances of word magic and does not constitute a metaphysically substantial move or commitment. The use of the singular terms which are used to refer to those entities do not *create* entities which were not already there (hence are neither *language-created* nor created in any other way). Rather, the use of the singular terms help make explicit our commitments to how things are with the entities that are there. These *pleonastic ways of being*, furthermore, play a part in *making true* the TBRs that refer to them, whether explicitly or implicitly. But since these entities are *metaphysically neutral*, committing ourselves to them is only committing ourselves to *how things are with things*.

Just to be absolutely clear about my central move in what follows, I *reject* Schiffer and Thomasson’s theory of pleonastic entities as language-created. Creation implies existence. Pleonastic *ways of being* are better understood as *intentional objects*, which we can talk about but which do not exist in themselves over and above the entities and how things are with these entities. Thus by talking *about* such ways of being we make

an even finer distinction than the distinction Crane (2001; discussed above in §2.6) made when he distinguished between *real and existing intentional objects* (as the table is when it is what T1 is about [recall, T1 is the TBR ‘the table exists’] and is what makes T1 true) and *non-real and non-existing intentional objects* (such as Pegasus, the intentional object of T8). We need a further distinction between *real and existing intentional objects* and *real intentional objects*, understood as real ways things are (though such ways do not constitute further *existing entities*). Of course, there is a further distinction still between real intentional objects (e.g. how things are with the table) and non-real intentional objects (how things are with Pegasus).

To make these points clear, I intend to properly introduce the notion of “word magic” in §A4.1, making a distinction between two general Options for interpreting the charge in our context.²³ Then in §A4.2, I explore and reject Option 1, explaining that this is what Musgrave himself probably thinks word magic is. In §A4.3, I make a distinction between the Representationalist and the SAC-ist, generally Cranean, reading of Option 2. I argue that on the first reading, Option 2 should be rejected as an incoherent notion of word magic. I then argue that Option 2 should be embraced on the second reading, and that it should be wielded against both metaphysically *substantial* views such as those of Marcus and Steward and those views intended to be metaphysically and ontologically *minimal* such as Schiffer and Thomasson’s. Whether this strategy is ultimately viable is a matter that can only be decided when we discover *what the best semantic theory* will say about *what the truths are about*. My general aim here is to help contribute to our understanding of what this best semantic theory might hold. I think that understood properly and seen in the light I put it in, SAC is not committed to “word magic,” and instead can use the charge of “word magic” to describe metaphysically less modest theories.

A4.1 Understanding the Charge of Word Magic

Let us start with a few examples, some of which are explicitly TMK-involving-TBRs:

T31: The cat is happy.

T32: The cat’s being happy makes true T31.

T33: The fact that the cat is happy makes true T31.

T34: Fido is a dog.

T35: Fido has the property of being a dog.

T36: Fido has the appearance of being a dog.

²³I ignore most of the detail of Musgrave’s actual critique of Schiffer and Thomasson, as a proper treatment of that would get us too far off track. I focus on and distill the elements that I think are most important. However, I do briefly mention relevant aspects of the critique and of Schiffer and Thomasson’s views which illuminate my discussion. As will be clear, in my discussion, I agree with Musgrave’s general line of reasoning against Schiffer and Thomasson’s theory.

T37: Fido has the luck to be a dog.

T38: Osama Bin Laden gives me the creeps.

T39: The teacher left the students in the lurch.

T34 is a TBR whose only singular term is 'Fido', that is, the proper name that refers to Fido. T35 is a TBR which has two singular terms: 'Fido' and '*the property of being a dog*', the latter being a definite description which, according to Schiffer (2003: 61),²⁴ refers to the property of being a dog. Importantly, we can make a conceptually valid inference from T34 to T35, since both entail each other. However, T34 and T35 do not seem to have the same meaning; their truth-conditions seem to be different. 'Fido is a dog' is true iff Fido is a dog, and 'Fido has the property of being a dog' is true iff Fido has the property of being a dog. In each case, the information conveyed is different. In the case of T34, the information that is conveyed tells us that Fido is a dog, that is, there is such a thing, Fido, and that thing is a dog. In the case of T35, the information that is conveyed tells us that Fido has the property of being a dog; that is, there is such a thing, Fido, and that thing has something referred to by the definite description '*the property of being a dog*'. However, the reason why T34 and T35 entail each other is that what it is for Fido to be a dog is the same as for Fido to have the *property of being a dog*. The predicate 'is a dog' in T34 implicitly refers to the same thing that the predicate 'has the property of being a dog' in T35 refers to, that is, the *property of being a dog*.

By contrast, however, T36 and T37 contain singular terms which refer to and are about Fido (in both T36 and T37) and the appearance of being a dog (in T36) and the luck of being a dog (in T37). Unlike with T34 and T35, we cannot make a similar inference from T34 to T36 or T37, since neither T36 nor T37 are entailed by T34. Neither having the appearance of being a dog nor having the luck of being a dog is the same thing as (or follows from) being a dog. *Being a dog* is a property which one can have without either having the appearance of being a dog (one can still be a dog while looking like a cat for instance) or having the luck of being a dog (in certain circumstances being a dog may be rather unlucky, as when one is running for mayor of London). Let us assume, however, that T34–T37 are all *true*; Fido is a dog that has the appearance of being a dog and has the luck of being a dog. What each of these sentences indicate is something about Fido: T34 and T35 indicate what species of animal Fido is;²⁵ what T36 tells us is something about Fido's appearance; what T37 tells us is something about Fido's luck. The important point is that each of these TBRs, partly because they are true and partly because they convey different pieces of information about the world, tell us something *about the world*, or more specifically, different ways that Fido is, differences in how things are with Fido.

²⁴Let's just follow Schiffer and his way of describing matters for now.

²⁵I assume that biological kinds are properties.

One way to analyse or explain what is happening is in terms of the TMKs. In the case of T34 and T35, we may say that they are each made true by the same *parts* of the world: Fido, the property of being a dog, and perhaps also the fact that Fido has this property.²⁶ T36 and T37, on the other hand, have different TMKs, from both T34 and T35 and each other. T36 is made true by Fido, the appearance of being a dog, and the fact that Fido has this appearance. The same TMKs that make T36 true presumably also make this TBR true:

T36*: Fido appears to be a dog.

Further, T36 and T36* mutually entail each other – it is not possible for one to be true without the other being true. What T35 and T36 have in common however, and which both T34 and T36* lack, are that they both have two singular terms ('Fido' and 'the property of being a dog' in the case of T35 and 'Fido' and 'the appearance of being a dog' in the case of T36). Furthermore, the TBRs each explicitly refer to Fido and also express information about some way that Fido *is*: *being a dog* and *appearing to be a dog*.

Musgrave (2009: 69ff), however, argues that the singular terms in T35–T37, which seem to refer to an appearance, an instance of luck, and a (biological) property, only seem or appear to do so explicitly. In fact, if one were to *reify* each of these entities, or ways that Fido is, one would be performing what he calls "word magic." What exactly is "word magic?" He says, word magic is: "The idea that once we invent or create a word or phrase, we invent or create an entity for that word or phrase to stand for" (2009: 69). What might he mean by this? Musgrave's charge against Schiffer and Thomasson is essentially that they claim that entities are *created merely* by the use of language; for example, we have created the property *being a dog* via the pleonastic transformation from T34 to T35. Thomasson (2001: 323–325) calls the language-created, pleonastic entities "ontologically minimal" because they are causally inert,²⁷ and unlike non-language-created entities such as dogs, their natures and everything there is to know about them can be known about them by "study[ing] the language games by means of which they are deposited in our ontology" (Thomasson 2001: 321).²⁸ Musgrave thinks this view is absurd (ibid.: 68). But, leaving aside the *language-created entities* element of his intended target view, let's try to understand what word magic is from other angles more congenial to our interests. I want to highlight two possible readings of what one may mean, which I shall focus on in the rest of my discussion:

²⁶Just to be clear, by speaking of this fact, we are not committing ourselves to any metaphysical theory of the nature of facts, just as we are not committing ourselves to any metaphysical theory of the nature of properties, appearances, or licks.

²⁷See also Schiffer who writes that pleonastic entities, "come softly into existence, without disturbing the preexisting causal order in any way" (2003: 59).

²⁸See also (Schiffer 1996: 159) for the same point.

Option 1: The singular terms (except 'Fido') in T35–T37 are not genuinely referential singular terms and thereby are not about anything at all. Instead the truth of T35–T37 can be accounted for in other ways.

Option 2: The singular terms in T35–T37 fail to refer to any entities at all, even though they are genuinely referential singular terms which purport to and when successful do refer to genuine entities. In fact there are no such entities as properties, appearances, and lucks.

According to Option 1, one is committing word magic by taking T35–T37 to contain genuinely referential singular terms which are about properties, appearances, lucks, etc., when *they aren't such terms*. The fact that they aren't genuinely referential is explained by some alternative way of accounting for what makes T35–37 true; that is, T35–37 are made true not by properties, appearances, lucks, nor by TMKs that involve them. According to Option 2, one is committing word magic because, although the terms are indeed genuine singular terms, they fail to refer, and the word magician claims that such entities exist anyway. The word magician is stepping out of his boots by positing a bloated ontology when the language we use, the TBRs we use to say true things, and the TMKs they are about, do not require it.

First, I shall explain that, as a matter of interpretation based on some of the other cases he presents,²⁹ Musgrave probably means Option 1. However, Musgrave is wrong to think that the terms in T35–T37 are not genuinely referential singular terms.³⁰ This option is not properly motivated. Second, I shall argue that Option 2 can be interpreted in two further ways, according to two theories of *aboutness*. I shall explain that on one of the interpretations, Option 2 can be rejected offhand. But, I shall argue that the other interpretation is the right and most attractive interpretation of "word magic" overall, and is the interpretation consistent with SAC.

A4.2 Rejecting Option 1

Option 1 is probably what Musgrave has in mind. In fact, his discussion of what he calls "Creeps Realism" (2009: 66ff) I think confirms this. Let's take the sentences T38 and T39 (from above) involving the creepy Osama Bin Laden and the teacher who leaves students in the lurch. Musgrave (and Dyke, who makes exactly the same point in her discussion of Lurch-Realism [2008: 1ff]) argues that we should not reify creeps, but still thinks that T38 (and T39) is true. 'The creeps' on his reading is not a genuinely referring singular term, but rather, a mere *façon de parler*. It would be absurd to reify creeps just because we can use words which apparently refer to them as part of a predicative expression and

²⁹We'll look at T38 and T39, which we've neglected to discuss so far.

³⁰I want to emphasise the fact that from now on, unless I am directly discussing a quotation from Musgrave, I want to be discussing not Musgrave himself, but one like Musgrave (and Dyke) who would take his line of reasoning to charge others of word magic.

via singular term expressions. Creeps Realism is absurd; no one thinks that there are such things as the creeps. However, Musgrave continues, creeps anti-realists who say that there are no such things as creeps and who say that TBRs such as T38 are false, apparently are also “guilty of the same oversight as creeps realists” (Musgrave 2009: 68). This is because such anti-realists are, as he describes them, “guilty of plonking literalism and insensitivity to idiom” (ibid.). According to Musgrave, the use of ‘the creeps’ in a TBR is idiomatic, and thus should not be taken literally. It is a referring expression but does not refer to anything. According to him, the anti-realist is right that it is not *literally true* but is wrong when she thinks that “every time we use an empty referring term, we say something false” (ibid.). To illustrate this, he uses a comparison with other empty referring expressions such as Santa Claus, of which one can presumably say many idiomatically (and fictionally), though not literally, true things. He writes:

“Santa Claus” is an empty term. But “Santa Claus does not exist” is true. And so are “I believed in Santa Claus when I was four,” “I was once delighted that Santa Claus had not forgotten me,” and so forth. Idiomatic uses of empty singular terms are similar. Creeps antirealists are right that they are not *literally* true, of course—just wrong that they are not true. [2009: 68]

Thus, just as TBRs containing reference to Santa Claus can be true, TBRs containing reference to creeps can be true too. However, creeps-talk, in TBRs apparently referring to creeps, is not literally true. Instead they are often true, in a non-literal, *idiomatic* way.

Musgrave (ibid.) now invokes a version of a TT-proposal³¹ to illustrate why T38 is true. T38 is *materially equivalent* to:

T38*: Osama Bin Laden makes me nervous.

T38* and T38 are *made true* by the same fact, that is, the fact that Osama Bin Laden makes him nervous.³² He provides two reasons for thinking that T38 and T38* are not *semantically equivalent*: (1) neither T38 nor T38* can be obtained from the other by the substitution of synonymous expressions (unlike for example ‘Osama is a bachelor’ and ‘Osama is an unmarried man’); and (2) that we distort ordinary English usage if we say that *they mean the same thing* and that they can be translated without loss of meaning. This is a straightforward case of two (apparently) non-synonymous truths having the same TMK. It is also a seemingly straightforward case in which the predicate-expression’s apparently referring singular terms do not in fact refer to *a property*. And, if this creeps-case is not just a special case, then we can conclude that reading off our ontology from language is problematic. We can perhaps generalise from this case to

³¹He even explicitly states that he “prefer[s] to speak of “truthmakers” rather than the more familiar “truth conditions.” The latter tend to hover somewhere in between things in the world (truthmakers) and meanings—as in the idea that “Meanings are truth conditions”” (ibid.: 68). I also distinguish between TMKs and truth-conditions in §8.4.1.

³²Remember, we’re not reifying facts.

all cases involving apparently singular terms which are created by Schiffer's "pleonastic transformations" (e.g. the transformation from T34 to T35). If 'the creeps' does not refer to anything in the world, then perhaps neither do any other of these pleonastically transformed (apparently) singular term.

Many of the steps in this argument are dubious. Two of the most important dubious steps are (1) his analysis of why 'the creeps' does not refer and thereby why we should be anti-realists about the creeps; and (2) his generalization from this case to other cases.

Against the first step, I'll make two points. First, the comment about empty referring terms being idiomatically true but literally false is wrong. The "plonking literalism" he claims that both creeps-realists and anti-realists are guilty of is not just not a problem but the way forward. His analysis of empty referring terms such as 'creeps' being *idiomatic*, I think, is where he runs into problems. He is right that there are plenty of true TBRs with empty referring expressions. But they are not all just *not literally true*. Negative existential truths such as T14: 'there are no hobbits', or his example about Santa Claus, are *literally true* because what the TBRs claim not to exist do not exist; their intentional objects do not exist. Just because 'hobbits' and 'Santa Claus' are fictional names does not mean that TBRs denying the existence of what they are about cannot be *literally true*. The other two examples he uses by way of analogy ("I believed in Santa Claus when I was four," "I was once delighted that Santa Claus had not forgotten me," from the quotation above) are true because the only things that the TBRs are about that would need to exist for them to be true is himself and how things were with him in terms of his beliefs and his delights at the relevant time. In neither case does Santa Claus need to exist or not. Things are a bit trickier with 'creeps' as I shall explain. True and false TBRs using that term are also true and false *literally*, though the expression itself is idiomatic.

As competent speakers of English, we know that 'the creeps' does not mean anything outside of the context of the overall predicative expression in which it is embedded. 'To give someone the creeps' is indeed, as Musgrave explains, an idiomatic expression in English. But importantly, and this seems to be a point that Musgrave misses, it is an idiomatic expression which any competent speaker of English who knows how to use the expression and who knows its place in the English language understands. It is what is called a petrified, or dead, metaphor, whose metaphoric use has been lost to us, and which now literally means the same thing as 'gives someone the feeling of revulsion or fear' or in some contexts 'makes someone nervous'. It is a noun that we have ended up with in our language, in such a way that no one actually knows what the *noun* means,³³ but it is embedded in an expression which we understand.

In fact, one way to understand a phrase such as 'the creeps' is that it is *not* a singular

³³I am leaving aside those philologists who are working hard at uncovering the right etymology of the noun.

term at all,³⁴ despite the fact that its surface grammar is very much like that of singular terms such as ‘the chairs’ or ‘the men’. It is an expression petrified in our language in such a way that it loses all meaning when taken out of the context, that is, the verb phrase in which it is petrified, and thus does not permit of normal usage. For instance, one cannot feel the creeps, or send someone the creeps, or give someone a creep, or help someone acquire a creep. It is, despite appearances, also a term whose usage has been petrified in other ways, which make it not just different from other apparent singular terms, but which make it not a singular term at all. It cannot, for instance, take on an indefinite article. It cannot take a plural form (and even though it looks plural, it cannot take on the singular form). One cannot amplify it; for instance, one cannot say ‘He gave me a big creep(s)’. It is not a singular term, despite the fact that the phrase ‘the creeps’ contains a definite article and a noun. This all brings out the fact that language develops over time, and in a living language you have fossilized nouns, the meaning or significance of which has been lost, and is hidden in the mists of time,³⁵ even though the phrase in which it is embedded *retains a meaning*, and thus can be given a *semantic account*. Everyone who competently understands ‘gives me the creeps’ knows all of this. Thus, against possible step (1) above, terms such as ‘the creeps’ are not just not genuinely referential singular terms, but not singular terms at all.

Musgrave’s analysis is wrong. The reason why claims such as

T40: There is no such thing as the creeps.

are true is not just because, as he claims, ‘the creeps’ is an idiomatic expression and thereby not a *genuinely referential expression*, but because it is not a singular term at all. One might claim that it is about the creeps in Crane’s sense of intentional object, which I am generally working with. This is because if we understand things in my favoured TT-SAC way, positive TBRs that commit us to the existence of creeps are false because there is *aboutness-failure* when there should not be and the intentional object does not exist, and negative TBRs which are committed to the denial of the existence of such things are true because there is *aboutness-failure* when there should be. However, most of the time that we use the term ‘the creeps’ in a TBR, we are not *committed* to the existence of *creeps* because what those TBRs are *about* and what they claim to be the case is not that some *thing* the creeps exists, but that some person is some way (for example, that someone is nervous or is mildly fearful of whatever gives one the creeps). This is why, as I see it, T38 and T38* are, despite Musgrave’s claim, not just materially equivalent but also in some sense semantically equivalent; the best semantic theory of

³⁴Musgrave would be right if this is what he means when he says that expressions involving ‘the creeps’ is idiomatic and not *genuinely referential*, but what I am doing is explicitly presenting the right reasons for thinking this as something that Musgrave misses.

³⁵This is one of the reasons behind my statement in §2.9 that what a TBR is about can change over time.

what they are about has it that they are about the same things and the same ways things are with those things.

To respond to the word magic charge as read in the Option 1 way above we need to explain that the singular terms referring to such things as properties, appearances, lucks, in such TBRs as T35–37, are indeed genuinely referential and about things. I think we can clearly do this. The way that I see singular terms such as ‘the property’, ‘the state’, ‘the luck’, and ‘the appearance’, is not that they are not genuinely singular terms, as ‘the creeps’ is not a genuinely singular term. They are also clearly not idiomatic. When T35–T37 are true, they are true not in some non-literal sense but because Fido indeed does have the appearance of being a dog, the property of being a dog, and the luck to be a dog. I cannot see how one can claim, in the same way that one might interpret ‘the creeps’ to be not a singular term, that these phrases are somehow not singular. They are genuinely singular terms; they just don’t refer to and aren’t *about* individual objects but rather refer to and are about how things are with objects in terms of their biological kinds, their appearance, their lucks, etc. So we must look to Option 2 for a better understanding of how one might be committed to word magic.

A4.3 Embracing Option 2 & Utilising the Charge of Word Magic

There are at least two further ways of interpreting Option 2, one according to the Representationalist intentionalist and the other according to the SAC-ist, generally Cranean intentionalist (see §2.6.1 for the distinction and §2.6.2 for why the SAC-ist is generally Cranean in a certain sense). I think that if one interprets things in terms of the Representationalist, one can reject the charge of word magic quite easily. However, if one interprets things in terms of the Cranean and SAC-ist, one can accept that the charge of word magic is an important charge that applies to theorists such as the *metaphysically substantialist* or *metaphysically minimalist* TT-ists, but definitely doesn’t apply to the *metaphysically modest* TAAT-ist.

On the Representationalist reading, Option 2 can be rejected almost offhand. On this reading, if a singular term purports to refer to an entity (and is committed to the positive being of what it is about) but the *aboutness* fails, the TBR in which it is embedded is false. A consequence of this is that T34 and T35 (and similarly T36 and T36*) turn out to have different truth-values, and hence they turn out not to entail each other when they should. To make vivid the problem that I am raising, let’s use Schiffer’s notion of an *algorithm for elimination*. To explain what this notion is, he writes,

Let Φ be a notion that is believed to have application and that is typically ascribed on the basis of certain kinds of evidence (Φ ’s *ascription basis*). Then Φ contains an *algorithm for elimination* provided that there is some

scientifically discoverable proposition p that is consistent with Φ 's ascription basis and such that it's *a priori* that Φ doesn't have application if it should turn out that p . [1990: 177]³⁶

We, for instance, are able to eliminate witches from both our ontology and the realm of intentional objects that we can successfully talk about, or rather we learn that there are no witches when we learn that there are no such women with certain causal powers. We have an algorithm for elimination for the notion 'witch' as it is *a priori* for those who use the notion that the notion doesn't apply if no women have the relevant causal powers (and this is, further, consistent with its ascription basis). Similarly, we safely eliminate phlogiston from our ontology and realm of potential reference when we learn that there is no substance that is given off with burning. There is a clear algorithm for elimination for both witches and phlogiston. However, what is the algorithm for elimination for properties, appearances, and lucks? Presumably, when something is a certain way, then that thing has a property. When something appears a certain way, that thing has an appearance. Some thing's being a certain way is just the same thing as that thing's having a property, and some thing's appearing some way just is the same thing as that thing having a certain appearance. On what grounds should one or can one eliminate these things? As Schiffer claims, "Our linguistic and conceptual practices give bases for asserting sentences that ostensibly entail reference to properties and propositions, but these practices give us nothing like an algorithm for elimination" (Schiffer 1996: 152). Presumably this *lack* of an algorithm for elimination is encoded in our normal linguistic practices concerning properties, appearances, and lucks. In our normal linguistic practice, the relevant TBR-pairs are in fact equivalent. Option 2, read in the Representationalist way, would require that T35 is false because 'the property of being a dog', according to the word magic charge, attempts, but fails to refer even if T34 is true and Fido is a dog. Read in this way, they are not equivalent, and this is clearly problematic. For instance, a consequence of the view would be a total revision of our normal linguistic practices. So, Option 2 (read in this Representationalist way) should be rejected.

The right way to understand what the charge of word magic amounts to in general, I think, is as Option 2 read in a SAC way which generally accepts Craneism (as I presented it in §2.6). On this reading, one is committing word magic if one uses singular terms to refer to and to be about *genuine entities*, thereby committing one to such entities, and such entities don't in fact genuinely exist (or there is no good non-linguistic nor linguistic reason to think that they do). I think that one can clearly be a word magician, and that this might be the right diagnosis for those who claim that the transformations, from T34 to T35 for instance, commit us to the *existence of an entity which is the property of being a dog*. This is what Thomasson and Schiffer would claim, even though they think that such properties are *pleonastic* and hence "ontologically minimal" (see above). And, I think this is what the categorial ontologist such as Marcus

³⁶See also (Schiffer 1996: 152).

(and probably also Steward) would claim, especially as illustrated by the consequences for ontology that they want to draw from the nominalisation strategy of Mourelatos (see §4.2.4), which I think is akin to Schiffer's pleonastic transformations. Unlike Thomasson and Schiffer with their pleonastic entities, the ontologists think it is possible for one to argue for the existence of events, processes, states, etc., by other than linguistic means. They are not merely language-created entities. But if an ontologist thinks that one can argue for the existence of these entities purely on the basis of linguistic data, nominalisations, and transformations, then it is hard to see how they are not committing some form of word magic.

However, of course, it might be possible that language can give us *evidence* about the world. For instance, genealogical investigations into the nature of such things as truth, which closely study the etymology and the history of the use of the concept and the term 'truth', assume that language encodes our knowledge of the world and can yield evidence about the world.³⁷ But this is different from claiming that we are committed to the existence of entities just because we can nominalise ordinary TBRs to refer to things such as states, events, processes, and facts. And it is different from arguing that because we know many of these nominalised TBRs to be true, that they must exist. This seems to be a version of word magic.

My SAC-version of TT can avoid the charge of word magic. This is because it is not committed to the existence of any entities such as SOAs and it is metaphysically non-committal or neutral about the *existence* of states, events, processes, properties, etc., *as entities*. Yet, the account can still accept that nominalised TBRs supposedly referring to such entities are true. For what we are ultimately *talking about* is fixed by what the *best semantic account says they are about*. The singular terms which are supposedly referring to states, events, process, etc., as entities are more than likely just referring to them or *about* them by being linguistic tools for talking about how things are with objects (recall in §2.4.2.1, I made clear that the toolbox of aboutness apparatuses extends beyond reference to objects). This doesn't commit the SAC-TT-ist to the existence of any further *entity*. But importantly also, it is not committing the SAC-TT-ist to what Schiffer and Thomasson call pleonastic *entities*. When we talk (in part) about appearances, lacks, and properties with T36, T37, and T35 respectively, we are not committed to their existence as entities in and of themselves, but are merely talking about how things are with Fido in the relevant way. Unlike pleonastic entities, these are real aspects and modes of being that we can talk about and are part of the TMKs for those TBRs when they are true.

When we make explicit reference to them we are in some sense talking about them *pleonastically*, in the sense found in any dictionary; for example Dictionary.com defines 'pleonasm' as "the use of more words than are necessary to express an idea; redundancy."

³⁷See for instance (Williams 2002: especially §4) for such a study of truth, especially where his discussion presents what he calls the "real history" (ibid.: 20) aspects of the genealogical narrative.

That means that the two phrases T36 and T36*, T34 and T35, one of which nominalises what we are talking about, and the other of which does not, are not just equivalent but basically mean the same thing and are strictly and fully *about the same things* and same *ways things are with the objects we are also talking about*. When we talk *pleonastically* about properties of Fido we are talking about properties merely in a different, though linguistically redundant, and perhaps at best *wordy* and at worst *misleading*, but still metaphysically non-committal, way of talking about *how things are with Fido*.³⁸

In conclusion, there is no reason to think that the SAC-TT-ist is committing an unsavoury form of word magic as some of the ontologists or the ontological minimalists might be interpreted as doing, nor is the SAC-TT-ist performing *any* kind of word magic. Rather, on the basis of the account's metaphysical neutrality and insubstantiality, it can utilise the charge of word magic to catch out those who are committing themselves to a kind of word magic. In §6, I spelled this out as *cheating*. And I presented my revised notion of *catching cheaters* as one of the tasks of TT.

³⁸In the terms I put it in fn.3 of §4 above, in my brief discussion of Yablo's criticism of Lewis's paraphrase argument for modal realism, and as Yablo (1996: 267) explains as well, we do not need to *entitatively* or *objectually quantify* over *hows* or *ways*, though we refer to them.

Appendix 5: TAAT and the Limits of Anti-Realism: *The Implausibility of Epistemic TMKs on Aboutness Grounds*

This appendix can be seen as an appendix to §7. However, the content is inessential to the overall argumentation of the dissertation. In §7, I argued that TAAT can help articulate what I call M-REAL, a modest form of realism which is compatible with most forms of anti-realism. M-REAL is, for instance, compatible with anti-realist versions of TT which *go beyond* BATT by providing pragmatist TMKs for all TBRs. In this appendix I shall argue, however, that a focus on TAAT and M-REAL can reveal some of the limits of anti-realism. In particular, I argue that some epistemic-focused versions of TT become implausible, since we can see, on aboutness grounds, that their version of anti-realism leads to incoherence and regress.

A5.1 Epistemic Anti-Realism

Dummett thinks that his Principle C, which I discussed in §1.4 and Appendix 1 and took to be a version of TT, is compatible with anti-realism. The basic anti-realist TT-move, in TMK terms,³⁹ is to claim that for some TBR p , p is made true by something⁴⁰ in the world, and *that something* is the evidence for p , the knowability or provability of p , the quality of our evidence for p , or some other epistemic facts. What this formulation captures is that the anti-realist believes that the right theory of meaning (the theory that explicates what TBRs mean) and the right theory of truth (the theory which tells us what truth is) are verificationist or epistemic. According to the Dummett-style⁴¹ anti-realist, both the meaning of p and the truth of p consist in the epistemic status of p . The meaning of p consists in the conditions under which p is verifiable or provable. And, the

³⁹It's fair to put the anti-realist move in TMK-terms because the relevant anti-realist here is one who is also a TT-ist.

⁴⁰I write 'something' here, not 'some *thing*'.

⁴¹By writing 'Dummett-style' I want to emphasise that I am completely agnostic as to whether this is Dummett's actual view or one that is merely inspired by Dummett's explication of anti-realism. I shall use some quotations from Dummett and interpret what he says there in a way that sheds light on what I call the "Dummettian."

truth of p consists in whether or not p is provable or verifiable. Principle C is understood in terms of VIRTUE, which is just the claim that truths are true *in virtue of* something in the world. But, VIRTUE leaves open the idea that the *something in the world* in virtue of which truths are true are epistemic facts. This view of truth and meaning is opposed to what Dummettians and others call the “truth-conditional theory of meaning,” where the meaning of TBRs, including those of some disputed class of entities, is given by their truth-conditions, the possibly verification- and evidence-transcendent conditions which must be satisfied for some TBR to be true.⁴² The anti-realist claims that this is a faulty theory of meaning and that the meaning of a statement consists in the conditions under which there is evidence for it. So truth has to do with conditions, but specifically with verification or evidence conditions. Dummett says this about the conflict:

The conflict between realism and anti-realism is a conflict about the kind of meaning possessed by statements of the disputed class. For the anti-realist, an understanding of such a statement consists in knowing what counts as evidence adequate for the assertion of the statement, and the truth of the statement can consist only in the existence of such evidence. For the realist, the notion of truth plays a more crucial rôle in the manner of determining the meaning of the statement. To know the meaning of the statement is to know what it is for the statement to be true: we may in the first place derive such knowledge from learning what is counted as evidence for its truth, but in this case we do so in such a way as to have a conception of the statement’s being true even in the absence of such evidence. [1963: 155]

Elsewhere, Dummett emphasises the same point slightly differently:

Realism I characterise as the belief that statements of the disputed class possess an objective truth-value, independently of our means of knowing it: they are true or false in virtue of a reality existing *independently* of us. The anti-realist opposes to this the view that statements of the disputed class are to be understood only by reference to the sort of thing that we count as evidence for a statement of that class. That is, the realist holds that the meanings of statements of the disputed class are *not directly tied* to the kind of evidence for them that we can have, but consist in the manner of their determination as true or false by states of affairs *whose existence is not dependent* on our possession of evidence for them. The anti-realist insists, on the contrary, that the *meanings of these statements are tied directly to what we count as evidence for them, in such a way that a statement of the disputed class, if true at all, can be true only in virtue of something of which we could know and which we should count as evidence for its truth*. The dispute thus concerns the notion of truth appropriate for statements of the disputed class; and this means that it is a dispute concerning the kind of *meaning* which these statements have. [1963: 146; my emphases]

⁴²It is interesting to note that paradoxically, if truth is knowability and knowability conditions are conditions for truth and such conditions are such that one understands a sentence by knowing them, then even according to the Dummettian, meaning turns out to be truth-conditions. But, the point that the Dummettian is trying to make is that on the theory that truth is recognition-transcendent, one cannot say that truth-conditions capture a good theory of meaning and understanding.

As Dummett makes clear, the distinction between the realist and the anti-realist, as he understands them in these two passages, has to do with the fact that the anti-realist thinks that the TMKs for TBRs (of the disputed class) essentially just are the evidence we have for those TBRs. And, rightly I think, Dummett points out that this dispute has also fundamentally to do with the fact that the anti-realist thinks that the meaning of the TBRs are directly tied to the kind of evidence we can have for those TBRs. As I have already argued (see §4.3 above), this version of anti-realist TT is compatible with M-REAL. The anti-realist obviously thinks that the evidential facts must be *real* evidential facts for those facts to count as TMKs.

Let's compare this with the normal realist TT-ist (not the modest realist TT-ist). Her view is that ordinary claims about tables and chairs *are about* tables and chairs. There is a clear conflict here between the realist TT-ist and the anti-realist TT-ist. Consider even a metaphysically modest version of the normal realist TT-ist. Such a TT-ist might remain agnostic about the nature of tables and chairs and can even be an idealist about the nature of tables and chairs. Even then, however, it is very clear that, minimally, there is a distinction being made between tables-and-chairs-whatever-their-intrinsic-nature-is and evidence for the existence of tables and chairs. This is the other, deeper side of the meaning thesis of the Dummettian anti-realist. As Dummett points out, the meaning thesis is that what it is to *understand* any TBR of the disputed class is to know what counts as the evidence for that statement. This anti-realist position which takes truths to be made true by epistemic facts is an obvious problem for any commonsense realism (in the normal, non-Ligginsian sense; see §7.4). This is because if anti-realism about the disputed domain is true then we are *not* talking about evidence-transcendent entities, whether they are material or ideas or whatever, in the way we thought we were when talking about them, but we are rather talking about the evidence for them. However, even such an anti-realist view is compatible with M-REAL since the anti-realist account of truth might be the *best semantic account of what truths are about*.

A5.2 The Problems for the Dummettian Anti-Realist TT-ist

Without going into the details of the various anti-realist arguments for their semantic theory, by agreeing that this articulation of the debate captures the distinction between realists and anti-realists, this sort of anti-realist will already have made her position open to attack.⁴³ One might argue that the anti-realist misunderstands what it is for

⁴³I will not go into the details of this, but there are other sorts of anti-realists who are immune to the considerations I raise in the following sections. Just as one example, I don't think my considerations apply to anti-realists such as the pragmatists I discussed in §1.6.1 who give an anti-realist account of T-REL itself, rather than of the TMKs.

something to be a TMK, for the way the Dummettian anti-realist understands things leads to (1) incoherence, and (2) to regress.

A5.2.1 The Problem 1: *Incoherence*

Independently of any commitments to any sort of metaphysical account of TMKs, there are strong reasons purely on the basis of *aboutness* grounds for limiting what are possible candidates for something to be a TMK that make it clear that this brand of anti-realism is not plausible. This anti-realist is wrong because TBRs about x cannot be about our evidence for x but are just about x . For example, TBRs about cars are not about our evidence for there being cars; they are just about cars, whatever the nature of cars is. Without making a distinction between cars and the evidence we have for them, we cannot make sense of the fact that a piece of evidence for the existence of a particular car is in fact evidence for there being the car. The existence and identity of the car itself is what *constitutes* a piece of evidence's being the evidence it is; it helps constitute the fact that the evidence is evidence *for* the existence of the car rather than for something else like the existence of a hippo.⁴⁴ Unless we can think and talk about cars, and not just our evidence for them, and hence be able to make a distinction between the cars and the evidence for the cars, then we lose the ability to talk about the evidence. This is because it will be impossible to individuate between different pieces of evidence for different things. Thus, unless we can make a general distinction between x and evidence for x , then thinking *about* either becomes incoherent.

Obviously, sometimes TBRs are actually about the evidence for something. For example, the TBR 'The evidence for this TBR is captured by what this TBR is (strictly and fully) about' is in part about its own evidence. Sometimes TBRs are about the knowability of something. For example, the TBR 'I know that this TBR is true' is about the knowability of that TBR. But this is rarely the case. So the anti-realist cannot argue that in most cases, for example in ordinary TBRs about cars, the TMKs or what the TBRs are about is the evidence for the TBR being true or the evidence for what it is about being the case. This would lead to incoherence.

A5.2.2 The Problem 2: *Regress*

Further, there are other reasons why it is implausible that what it is to understand TBR x is what it would be to have evidence that x . Let us consider a specific piece of evidence

⁴⁴I assume of course that evidence is always evidence *for something*. Something cannot be *evidence* without being *evidence for something*. For example, a dagger cannot competently be picked as evidence unless it is picked up as evidence for something, say, the murder of Caesar. A policeman might pick up a blood-stained dagger without knowing what exactly it is evidence for, but its status as evidence is contingent on there being something for which it is evidence.

for the fact that there is a yellow car across the road from where I am. One (good) piece of evidence for this might be that it looks as if there is a yellow car across the road from where I am.

Let us say that the meaning thesis (above) is correct; let us say that it is correct that understanding *that there is a yellow car across the road from where I am* consists in what it would be to have evidence for it. For example, it might consist in facts such as *that it looks like there is a yellow car across the road*. But one might then ask what does understanding the latter evidential fact consist in? According to the theory, there being evidence that there is a yellow car across the road would consist in there being evidence that there is evidence that there is a yellow car across the road, that is, that it *looks like* it looks like there is a yellow car across the road. And so on. Thus, not only is such an account of what truths are about incoherent (as I argued in the previous section), but it also leads to what looks to be an *infinite regress*. Understanding a simple-non-evidential fact, such as the fact that there is a yellow car across the road, turns out not to be understanding that fact at all. Rather it has now become too difficult to pick out what one understands, in the constantly shifting sands of what it is that we are talking about. We never get to say what we intend to say. At best, what one understands is a deeply, perhaps infinitely, embedded evidential fact. This, however, is not plausible. Therefore, this sort of anti-realist account of what truths are about is not satisfactory.

Thus, the anti-realist who takes the TMKs of ordinary TBRs to be *evidential facts* have an unsatisfactory account of what we are talking and thinking about and what makes what we say true. This kind of anti-realist view is an example of an anti-realist view which *is* incompatible with the more plausible M-REAL and TAAT. And we have achieved the result that such a view is unsatisfactory merely by reflecting on what could plausibly count as *the best semantic theory of what truths are about* (and not by begging the question against the anti-realist).

A5.3 A General Lesson to Draw from this Discussion: *Distinguishing p from evidence for p*

I want to make a further, general point now. I have argued in several places that TT is compatible with anti-realism. But in the preceding discussion of this section I have tried to draw some limits to TT-anti-realism by ruling out theories on which TMKs are solely evidential facts. Knowing what we intend to mean when we use language grounds or underlies our ability to then go out and try to discover whether what we say is true. Knowing what we are talking about is a crucial step in inquiry, and allows us then to go out and find evidence for it (§8). If we never know what we intend to say, or as the evidence-focused anti-realist must say, that we never mean what we intend to mean, then we cannot even begin to gather evidence for what we say. Understanding *p* (in the

normal understanding of p) comes prior to knowing what counts as evidence for p . At the very least, perhaps they go hand-in-hand, but they must be conceptually distinct. We must understand separately and be able to distinguish between what p is from what counts as evidence for p . Otherwise we will not be able to identify that the piece of evidence is a piece of evidence for p . For example, even if one has stumbled upon the evidence for *water's being H_2O* , unless one understands what it is evidence for, one will not be able to understand that it is evidence for *water's being H_2O* . Further, one can understand that *water is H_2O* even though one might not be able to prove that this is the case nor have any idea as to what would make a good experiment or piece of evidence to prove it. Thus, it seems much more plausible that coming to know what would constitute *evidence for water's being H_2O* comes after first understanding *water is H_2O* , rather than the other way around and rather than their being the same thing. So, it cannot be right that understanding p is knowing what it would be to have evidence for it; they must be distinguished. For these reasons, we need to distinguish between, on the one side, *the evidence for x* justifying our beliefs and helping us have knowledge of x , and, on the other side, (where p is about x) p 's being true and being made true not by our having evidence for or knowledge that x but by x itself.

It is interesting to note that Strawson (1977: 19–20) has a similar argument concerning the *aboutness* of truths. Strawson points out (ibid.) that sentences, such as 'Lord Anglesey had his leg shot off at Wellington's side', must mean the same thing when uttered by two different people even if they are in radically different situations in terms of their access to evidence for this statement. A man who was there on the day in question is warranted in uttering it on the basis of memory and observation, while we, centuries after the fact, only have access to historical evidence. The intuition underlying Strawson's argument and point is that, as I say, we must be able to distinguish between the evidence for p and p ; they are two different subject-matters and, thus, sentences referring to them are about different subject-matters too.⁴⁵

We might call this the Aboutness Objection to evidence-focused anti-realists and to others who give a revisionary theory of meaning in terms of epistemic conditions. As the reader might recall, different forms of this objection are wielded throughout this dissertation; for example I also use it to challenge TF-ist in §5. I think that what underlies this style of objection is that when we use TBR some ' p ' assertorically and to state a fact about the world, it is unlikely and implausible that we are not saying what we mean to express. It is implausible and unlikely that the TBR we are using is not about what we think it is *about*, as long as we are semantically competent and have a refined, semantically plausible sense of *aboutness* with a good awareness of some of the

⁴⁵And there are others too who wield a kind of aboutness objection to certain forms of anti-realism. See especially (Johnston 1993: 307–312) for an extended argument of this sort against verificationists about meaning (specifically Dummett and Putnam). See also (Loux 2003: 655–656) against Dummett's positive programme.

deeper issues concerning what the best SEM-TAC is (see §2.4.1). It is, however, also unlikely that the TBRs we use are about something radically different than we think, such as our evidence for p . M-REAL properly captures the realist insight that underlies this objection. M-REAL is clearly compatible with most anti-realist theories which differ from realist theories only by providing a radically different view of the *metaphysical nature* of what we are talking about. For example, it is clearly compatible with error theories, idealism, and intuitionism concerning mathematics, where a proof-construction theory of the subject matter of mathematical truth is far more plausible than let's say an evidence-focused theory of ordinary truths about tables, chairs, and yellow cars. Despite this compatibility with anti-realism, M-REAL clearly can be used in a non-question-begging way, using only the tools of semantic theory to try to undermine theories which have an implausible theory of what truths are about, and hence what the TMKs are for a particular domain.

Appendix 6: *Alstonian NEUTRALISM is Compatible with M-REAL*

As the reader will recall, in §7.5, I favourably mentioned Alston's (1996) position on truth called "alethic realism" and called his view an *extreme neutralist view*. His neutralism is captured by the following sentence which I favourably quoted already:

Though a particular realist or antirealist metaphysical position (of the sorts we have been considering) has implications for what propositions are true or false, they have no implications for what it is for a proposition to be true or false. [ibid.: 78; his italics]

In this appendix, which can be seen to be an appendix to §7, I compare Alston's (1996) alethic realism with my version of TT. I shall argue that Alston's view is a version of TAAT or at least that what he says about his view is compatible with TAAT and M-REAL. I then explain what is so extreme about his neutralism. I present and defend Alston against van Woudenberg's (2002) argument that Alston is not actually neutralist. My interpretation and defence of Alston reveal how *extreme* his neutralism is. I then discuss some of Alston's remarks about the nature and importance of truth. I argue that to preserve his stance on the importance of truth, he should retreat from extreme neutralism to a more modest neutralism, which I think should be integrated into M-REAL.

Alston claims to articulate his view on truth, namely "alethic realism," thus: "A statement (proposition, belief . . .) is true if and only if what the statement says to be the case actually is the case" (1996: 5). He adds, "The 'content' of a statement — what it states to be the case — gives us everything we need to specify what it takes for the statement to be true" (ibid.). He also puts it explicitly in terms of what the TBRs are *about* thus: "a proposition is true if and only if what the maker of a statement with that proposition as content is attributing to what the statement is *about*, in making that statement, does actually qualify what the statement is *about* [. . .] And so on" (ibid.: 26; my emphases). He even puts things in explicitly TMK-terms, arguing that the Tarski formulation commits us to a TMK-formulation, when he says,

[I]n saying that the proposition that lemons are sour is true *if and only* if lemons *are* sour, we are, in effect, committing ourselves to the thesis that this proposition is *made true* by lemons being sour. And that could just as well be put as saying that it is made true by *the fact that* lemons are sour. [ibid.: 32; his emphases]

Thus it is obvious that Alston is a confirmed believer of TAAT or at least a TT-ist of similar persuasions.

However, as is clear from the quote at the beginning, he claims that his alethic realism carries no worldly implications whatsoever. He also adds,

Just as the issues between metaphysical realism and a nonrealist opposition is *not* an issue about what truth is, so the question of how truth should be construed is *not* an issue over the existence, or metaphysical constitution or status, of one or another type of entity. Alethic realism is a view about what truth is, whereas the metaphysical positions in question have to do with what *kinds of propositions* are true. And just as we must not confuse the question of what virtue is with the question of what virtues there are, as Socrates liked to remind us, so we must not confuse the question of what truth *is* with the question of what truths there are. [ibid.: 80; his emphases]

As I have made clear in §6.4, I am deeply sympathetic with what Alston says here. He even defends alethic realism from, and puts it in opposition to, any epistemic theory of truth, such as the ones I discussed in Appendix 5.⁴⁶ However, as he remarks further, “[A]lethic realism is neutral with respect to virtually all the controversies over the metaphysical status of this or that domain that go under the name of “realism vs. antirealism,” including the relatively global ones” (ibid.: 84). In particular, even idealist positions, which take “most of reality to be independent^[47] of anything human [such as] Berkeleian idealism, Leibnizian and Whiteheadian panpsychism, and absolute idealism [...] can be as enthusiastic an alethic realist as his realist opponent” (ibid.: 81–82). Thus Alston agrees with what I have argued throughout §7 that TT and especially TAAT is compatible with all sorts of anti-realisms and non-realist views.

Alston’s main argument for this is that the nature of truth itself is distinct from whether any truths are true. He claims that all these views on either side of the realism/anti-realism debate must presuppose alethic realism but the metaphysical status of any of the entities in question has no bearing on or consequences for the truth of alethic realism itself. To illustrate this Alston (ibid.: 78–79) says that the quark realist and anti-realist will hold that the TBR ‘quarks exist’ is true iff quarks exist, but they’ll disagree about the truth of the TBR. Both the phenomenalist and Berkeleian idealist can (and should) believe that *p* is true iff *p*, but they will disagree that the sentence ‘there is a spruce tree in front of my house’ expresses the proposition <there is a spruce

⁴⁶See especially his (ibid.: §7, 188–231) for an extended discussion of epistemic conceptions of truth.

⁴⁷Alston says “independent” here presumably because the views he lists are idealist because reality depends on something else (e.g. the ideas of God) than the ideas of humans.

tree in front of my house>. Rather they will claim that the proposition expressed is a complex one about ideas and the experiences one will have in certain circumstances (the phenomena). Obviously the robust realist will claim that the ordinary, perhaps folk, interpretation applies to the sentence. This all perfectly illustrates what I have been saying thus far.

Alston claims further that even the truth of alethic realism does not imply anything about reality (see [ibid.: 79–82]). This is because alethic realism is not committed to any view about the metaphysical status of either the TBRs, such as the propositions, statements, beliefs, that are either true or false, the property of truth (which one can be nominalist about even if one is an alethic realist), or the TMKs. Presumably conclusions about the metaphysical status about any of these depend on the truth of certain metaphysical theses (concerning them) which are neither presupposed by nor affect the truth of alethic realism. Recall, this is also how I set up BATT in §1.3 and §1.7.

However, there are several responses that I want to give to Alston's neutralism. They boil down to the fact that Alston's neutralism seems not to be as neutral as he thinks it is. First, as has been pointed out by others, what Alston says in several places in his book seems to be inconsistent with his neutralist stance. For instance, van Woudenberg (2002: 122) points out that Alston explicitly argues against Strawson's view of facts, which Alston summarises as the view that facts are "mere shadows of our practice of making statements – mere pseudo entities that have no standing independent of our linguistic activity" (1996: 39). Alston claims that Strawson's notion of facts makes the connection between facts (i.e. what he takes to be the TMKs) and TBRs too intimate (ibid.). And, if the connection is too intimate, it renders expressions of alethic realism, for example "that the statement that grass is green is made true by the fact that grass is green," as Alston writes, "not so much false as vacuous" (ibid.).

Instead, according to Alston, facts have "objective reality independent of our linguistic and cognitive activities" (ibid.). Of course, I agree with van Woudenberg (ibid.: 122–123) that Alston's discussion here points to the fact that Alston must be a realist, at least about facts. However, this is perfectly consistent with the fact that alethic realism *does not entail* realism, even about facts. The truth of alethic realism is consistent with its being vacuous, as Alston implies in his discussion.

Again, van Woudenberg (2002: 122) cites another discussion that shows that Alston is committed to realism concerning facts. He cites Alston's statement in his book's epilogue that the fundamental root of the opposition to alethic realism lies in what he calls the "intolerance of vulnerability" (Alston 1996: 264), which Alston explains thus: "This vulnerability to the outside world, this 'subjection' to stubborn, unyielding facts beyond our thought, experience, and discourse, seems powerfully repugnant, even intolerable to many" (ibid.). Thus, as van Woudenberg points out, Alston diagnoses the opposition to alethic realism as a rejection of facts having a metaphysically realist characterisation, as "beyond our thoughts, experience, and discourse" (2002: 122), thereby implying that

alethic realism is committed to this.

In fact, I disagree with van Woudenberg here; it seems to me that what Alston is doing is pointing out that *the opposition to alethic realism* stems from a conflation of alethic realism with metaphysical realism. He is not committing alethic realism to metaphysical realism.

However, despite the fact that van Woudenberg's discussion here is, I think, inconclusive, I agree with him that Alston is in many ways, despite his insistence on neutrality, committed to the connection between alethic realism and worldly realism at least of the M-REAL sort. But more importantly, given what he himself writes about alethic realism, he cannot deny that alethic realism (and TT), when properly understood, commits us to M-REAL. Alston writes that alethic realism is made up of two theses:

- (1) that alethic realism is the correct account of truth relevant for and "confined [not just] to academic philosophy [but. . .] widespread in theology and religious studies, in literary theory, in the social sciences, and elsewhere" (ibid.: 7); and
- (2) "It is important, for a variety of purposes, that statements, beliefs, and so on, be assessed for truth value. Truth is important" (ibid.: 6).

I think that Alston is right that what truth is, is one thing, what the truths are, another. This means that one can be completely neutral about the metaphysical status of almost anything and about the truth of TBRs about them. And at the same time, one can consistently think that alethic realism and TAAT are correct and thereby that truths are true in virtue of what they are about being the case. All one is committed to is just that fact and nothing else about the nature of what it is for things to be the case, or what the *in virtue of* relation amounts to.

But, Alston cannot hold those two additional theses about alethic realism and maintain his *extreme* neutralism. Obviously the truth of alethic realism is compatible with there being no other truth (except perhaps those that it strictly entails). But the fact that there are no truths about anything is not compatible with alethic realism (1) applying to academic philosophy, the various sciences, religious studies, etc., and (2) its being important. Strictly speaking and as I have maintained throughout my dissertation, metaphysical neutralism and modesty are correct. However, in the background of the debate there must be a commitment to there being plenty of truths. Otherwise Alston is admitting defeat to the truth nihilists who claim that truth is insignificant and not important at all and does not apply to any domain of inquiry. Because there are many truths, and because the realist conception of truth is the right one, we must at the very least be realists about what we are talking about. We must be M-REAL-ists.

In fact, Alston ends his discussion with a discussion of what he calls "the grain of truth" (ibid.: 83) in the idea that "alethic realism is committed to the independent (of human cognition) reality of everything we think or talk about, except, of course, human

cognition itself" (ibid.: 82), which he admits he subscribed to fully in the past (ibid.). This grain of truth is that, as he explains

[A]lethic realism, together with the obvious fact that self-reference in statement or belief is rare at best [i.e. that statements or beliefs are rarely about themselves but are almost always about other things], implies that (almost always) what confers a truth value on a statement is something independent of the cognitive-linguistic goings on that issued in that statement, including any epistemic status of those goings on. *To that extent*, alethic realism implies that what makes statements true or false is independent of our thought and talk. This could be taken as a minimal sense in which alethic realism carries with it a metaphysical realism concerning the status of truth makers. [ibid.: 84]

What Alston is clearly agreeing with is the kind of modesty that I have been spelling out throughout the thesis. His NEUTRALISM does not build-in substantial metaphysical commitments into his version of TT. Although his version of *what truths are about* assumes that they are independent of "cognitive-linguistic goings on" (ibid.), he clearly does not think that this is always the case; for instance when we are explicitly talking about TBRs or about cognitive matters. But, I think it is plausible to agree with Alston that generally what we are talking about are not our cognitive-linguistic goings on, including the epistemic status of those goings on. The independence-of-thought-and-talk inherent in this claim is clearly a very modest one. In particular, it is compatible with idealism and other theories of the nature of reality; though importantly, it does not say anything about the truth of such views either.

In effect, I think Alston's NEUTRALISM, when properly interpreted is compatible with M-REAL and helps mark the limits of both TT-realism and TT-anti-realism, and reveals to what extent we can and should be neutral about either.

And, as I hope to argue in the future, both our views, his alethic realism about truth, and my modest realism about TMKs and what truths are strictly and fully about, leave sufficient room for establishing not just the importance of the relation between truth and reality, but also the importance of truth itself. This concludes my discussion.

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